

News Release



AvTurf's One Year at Chicago Midway Signals Future of Runway Safety

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One Year Anniversary

Marking one year since its installation at Chicago Midway Airport, AvTurf® remains the industry leader poised for industry-wide airport acceptance as the synthetic grass surface designed to improve safety, security and efficiency at airports worldwide.

Regarded as a "multi-faceted approach" to runway safety, AvTurf® pioneered the concept and creation of an artificial surface in the airport environment for runway and taxiway safety areas. With airports seeking solutions to regain the trust of the traveling public, the installation of AvTurf® provides immediate results in safety and security.

Recent events (September 11, 2001) causing the airport industry's reversal of fortune has each airport re-evaluating its capital improvements.

According to Pat Carr, president of Chicago-based Airport Surface Technologies, the patent pending product and installation process meets and exceeds part 139 requirements for airports. AvTurf® will increase runway safety while at the same time save millions of dollars in money lost through aircraft damage, airfield maintenance and runway delays.

"Safety is still paramount and goes hand in hand with security," said Carr. "The installation of AvTurf® makes each runway more efficient, safer and less dependent upon field manpower. It will create a sterile environment in the air operations area, which is critical in maintaining security. The investment return will be a reality in less than five years or immediately in the prevention of an accident. These are improvements the industry needs now."

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reported that it found AvTurf® acceptable to install in the runway safety areas per 14 CFR Part 139 and applicable advisory circulars. AvTurf's industry acceptance is linked to its status as the only artificial grass tested, approved and installed at any airport in the world.

"The results we've seen at Midway in one year's time alone build a case for industry-wide acceptance," said Al Perez, Midway Airport general manager of operations. "No product or solution can match AvTurf's safety features or long-term investment return."

Manufactured by Chicago-based Airport Surface Technologies and designed for non-paved areas between runways and taxiways, AvTurf® was developed and tested specifically for airports and their environment. It has a life expectancy of 10-15 years and serves as a low-tech answer for airports seeking safer and more efficient runways.

The lab testing of AvTurf® began two years ago; followed by the first-ever installation in Chicago more than a year ago. AvTurf® successfully passed several tests at Midway Airport, including exposure to a jet blast, the weight of a Boeing 757 airliner and fire testing. Additionally, emergency and service vehicles in excess of 80,000 pounds traversed on AvTurf® without any damage to the turf. Wildlife Biologist observations show that birds failed to congregate on the surface, as they are accustomed to doing on natural turf. Carr says his team has worked hard to bring the product to a successful implementation.

"Our team has decades of experience in certification inspections, disaster drills, accident investigations, airfield maintenance, safety and security programs," Carr said. "With the addition of experts in synthetic fiber composition, manufacturing and installation, we have successfully pooled our ideas and experiences to design and implement the first-ever artificial turf for airports."

According to Carr, the aviation industry can anticipate site specific decreases in runway delays due to incursions, bird strikes and maintenance of these areas. This alone will enhance capacity without pouring concrete.