

News Release



Airport Surface Technologies Breaks New Ground With Engineered Artificial Turf for World's Airfields

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Introduction of AvTurf® Will Enhance Safety and Reduce Operational Costs of Major Airports

Airport Surface Technologies Inc. (AST) has developed the aviation industry's first artificial grass surface engineered specifically for airfield grounds. Called AvTurf®, this aerospace synthetic surface has recently completed its beta site testing at Chicago Midway's airport and is now being introduced by AST as a safety enhancement to airports worldwide.

AvTurf® is a patent-pending product and process incorporating a tufted fiber to emulate the look of natural grass, with an installation process that eliminates or reduces the associated costs and problems of the mowing, maintenance and environmental management of natural grass surfaces.

According to AST, when AvTurf® is installed in the runway and taxiway safety areas, the product adds a new dimension of safety and operational ease by eliminating threats that can cause delays or endanger the safety of passengers and airport personnel. Because of the nature of the product, runway incursions, bird strikes and potential hazardous and flammable conditions are all categorically reduced.

AvTurf® reduces the potential for runway incursions by simply reducing or eliminating the necessity of mowing, debris pick-up or maintenance around runway and taxiway safety areas. By removing the need for personnel and equipment to be in the area, AvTurf® removes the possibility of delays and incursions due to their presence.

Because it is artificial, AvTurf® also helps to solve another significant issue that has become a growing concern for the industry: recurring bird strikes. According to the Bird Strike Committee USA, the probability of a major carrier disaster resulting from a bird strike is predicted to increase to approximately 25% in the next 10 years. By altering the main components for their survival habitat -- water, food and adequate cover, birds will naturally seek an environment more suitable to sustaining life.

AvTurf® is naturally fire retardant. At a recent burn test conducted at Chicago's Midway Airport, AvTurf® was able to extinguish itself out when consumed by fire. When ignited with jet fuel, the surface continued to burn only when saturated with the accelerant. In each case, the synthetic surface did not propagate a flame.

In addition to its fire retardant characteristics, AvTurf® is capable of supporting the weight of aircraft and airport vehicles in any weather. Emergency vehicles can readily traverse AvTurf's surface in the most extreme climate conditions, allowing faster access to an aircraft when required.

AvTurf® is one of the few product strategies that can actually create a return on investment for an airfield. The maintenance and operations budget will see a significant reduction in labor costs, equipment maintenance, chemical and herbicide line items. This increase to the bottom line will remain annually with a life expectancy of 10-15 years. For the airport manager, it results in increased safety, reduced runway closures, and headaches with more time focused on efficiency and profitability.

AvTurf® is a safety product and should not to be confused with a sports or landscaping surface. Our aviation safety team engineered this product specifically for airports with the potential to save lives and equipment.

The surface can be cleaned with a special vacuum cleaner that is available specifically for this application. Instead of repeating the numerous mowing cycles during the peak seasons, the surface can be cleaned on a much less frequent basis, depending on the climate of the region.