

AvTurf® Found Acceptable to Part 139 Standards

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AvTurf® has been found acceptable to install in the runway safety areas per 14 CFR Part 139 and applicable advisory circulars. The patent pending product and installation process will meet and exceed mandatory federal requirements for airports in these critical areas. AvTurf® will increase runway safety and save millions of dollars in money lost through runway delays and airfield maintenance, said Pat Carr, president of Chicago-based Airport Surface Technologies.

AvTurf®, a synthetic grass safety surface designed to improve safety, reduce bird strikes and reduce delays associated with runway operations, is a low-tech answer for the nation's airports seeking more efficient runways. Manufactured by Chicago-based Airport Surface Technologies and designed for non-paved areas between runways and taxiways, the product was developed and tested specifically for airports and their environment. It has a life expectancy of 10-15 years.

According to Carr, the aviation industry can anticipate site specific decreases in runway delays due to incursions, bird strikes and maintenance of these areas. Human factors account for the majority of safety incidents and accidents at airports. The product appeals solely to these factors, if people can see something that is half the battle. When you can remove the potential of someone or something from being in these areas that is the other half, Carr says.

AvTurf® features for improving airport safety are:

- Reduces the food source for wildlife, thus reducing bird hazards around runways and taxiways
- Increased visibility of safety areas resulting in reduced incursions
- Emergency vehicle traffic can traverse AvTurf® in any climatic condition
- Compacted to hold occasional passage of aircraft in wet or dry situations.
- Superior drainage
- Eliminates soil erosion
- No mowing involved, reducing gas emissions
- Aids in the retention of hazardous fluids
- Fire retardant characteristics

Following the first-ever installation in Chicago six months 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 totaling 80,000 pounds traversed on AvTurf® without any damage to the turf. USDA 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.

"We have gone through years of certification inspections, disaster drills, accident investigations, maintenance and safety programs. 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."

He also adds, "When you experience these issues first hand, and have lost friends and co-workers to aircraft accidents, you tend to be a bit more passionate about safety".

Carr says the AvTurf® staff has more than 200 years of combined experience in aviation safety, airport operations, excavation and synthetic turf installation/manufacturing.