



SAFETY NET

RUNWAY STOP BARS - WHAT EVERY PILOT MUST KNOW

Runway incursions are a serious safety threat. Globally they have caused major accidents. Many runway incursions occur when pilots acknowledge air traffic control (ATC) hold short instructions but then proceed beyond the runway holding point.

Stop bars are intended to provide additional protection of runway/taxiway intersections to reduce runway incursions by:

- enhancing visibility of holding points
- reinforcing the control of aircraft and vehicles in the vicinity of holding points
- increasing the defence against controller error in aircraft or vehicle identification.

Stop bars also enable low visibility operations such as CAT II/III instrument landing system approaches.

WHAT IS A STOP BAR?

Stop bars are a series of unidirectional lights at right angles to the taxiway centreline. The lights are spaced three metres apart and located 0.3m before the holding point.

Stop bars show red in the direction of approach to the stop bar from the taxiway and are controlled by ATC.

STOP AT THE RED LIGHT

Pilots must comply with the following when stop bars are in operation:

- never cross an illuminated stop bar
- only proceed past a stop bar when ATC provides the appropriate verbal instruction **AND** switches the stop bar lights off.

Recommended practice:

- Ensure that at least one member of the crew is able to sight the stop bars
- Check stop bars every time before entering the runway
- Check stop bars when reading back ATC clearance to enter the runway

NOTE: Under normal operations, when stop bars are extinguished, lead on lights come on.

CASA LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The requirement for a pilot or vehicle driver to stop at an illuminated stop bar is clearly given in Australian legislation and pilot documentation (CASA Instrument Number 466/07).

These requirements are consistent with the ICAO position as stated in Annex 2 Rules of the Air:

- aircraft taxiing on the manoeuvring area shall stop and hold at all lighted stop bars and may proceed further when the lights are switched off.

WHAT IF ATC GIVE A CLEARANCE BUT THE STOP BAR IS STILL ILLUMINATED?

Pilots must remain behind an illuminated stop bar until it is switched off.

If you have been issued an instruction to proceed and the stop bar has not been switched off:

- DO NOT cross the illuminated stop bar AND
- immediately query the instruction with ATC.

WHERE ARE STOP BARS CURRENTLY USED?

Stop bars have been installed at Melbourne and Sydney airports. Stop bars and Runway Guard Lights (RGL) are positioned at all runway/taxiway intersections. More details for each aerodrome are available in ERSA.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Safety Improvement Branch

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