

Air Traffic Control Changes during Runway Construction

Notice Number: NOTC3380



Air traffic controllers implemented a policy change on September 22, 2011, that they thought was straight-forward and would improve safety during periods of runway construction. They recently received some feedback from GA pilots that their policy changes might be confusing to anyone seeking a "short" approach, land-and-hold "short," or other use of short/shortened.

To avoid any further misunderstanding, please make note of the following language that might be used during periods of construction at an airport.

ATIS - When a runway length has been temporarily or permanently shortened, the word "WARNING" will preface the runway number, and the word "shortened" will be included in the text of the message. The ATIS will include the available runway length, as stated in the NOTAM, and must be broadcast for the duration of the construction project.

Example: "Warning, Runway One-Zero has been shortened, niner-thousand eight hundred and fifty feet available, consult NOTAMs."

Departure Information - ATC will not use the term "full length" when the runway length available for departures has been temporarily shortened. The use of the term "full length" could be interpreted by the pilot(s) as the available runway length prior to the runway being shortened. Whenever a runway length has been temporarily or permanently shortened, the word "shortened" will be used immediately following the runway number as part of the lineup and wait clearance.

Example: "(Call sign), Runway Two-eight shortened, line up and wait."
"(Call sign), Runway Two-eight shortened, cleared for takeoff."

Landing Information - The addition of "shortened" must be included in the landing clearance for the duration of the construction project when the runway is temporarily shortened. Note that the use of the term "shortened" in this case has nothing to do with short approaches or short field landings and everything to do with jogging your memory (NOTAMs and ATIS were your first awareness) about the condition of the runway in use.

Example: "(Call sign), Runway Two-eight shortened, continue."
"(Call sign), Runway Two-eight shortened, cleared to land."

ATC phraseology will include "warning" and "shortened" for operations on permanently shortened runways for at least 30 days or until the Airport/Facility Directory has been updated, whichever is longer.

Bottom line, whenever you hear ATC use the term “**shortened**”, this is your cue that the runway you are about to use has been shortened and has a relocated threshold on at least one end. If that surprises you in any way, get all the information you need prior to using the runway!

Always check NOTAMs and the latest publications for other updates