

AIRFIELD SURFACE – TAXIING, TAKEOFF & LANDING

Soft field Conditions

During the winter months and after prolonged heavy rain the grass surface of the airfield will become soft and in places rather boggy. Whilst these conditions prevail great care and of course good airmanship must be exercised. Please use the runway distance remaining boards for both take-off and landing decision making.

Taxiing

When the surface is very wet even just touching the brakes can cause the wheels to lock. Braking in turn causes the grass to be pulled out of the ground or killed off by decapitation which can then render the runway unusable. Wide radius turns are essential. Note that certain areas unsuitable for taxiing over may be coned off at times and pilots should make themselves familiar with the cones and soft field areas before flying. Give a wide berth to these areas. Pilots will normally be advised by the air/ground radio operator of their position (a diagram will usually be available in operations) and where necessary NOTAMS will be published.

Take off

When the conditions are soft you will need to use the correct take off technique and the correct weight and balance calculations. If you are unsure about any of this, please ask an instructor. Remember that your take-off run will be much longer than you are used to when soft conditions exist. **Please use either left or right of the runway centreline as directed by the Ops Team in order to avoid the worst affected areas and spread the wear.**

Landing

As long as you execute your usual text-book landing with ample room for the landing roll and a relaxed turn off of the runway - then there should be no problem landing on wet surfaces. However (and particularly in soft conditions), if you find yourself still airborne and past the 600 metre remaining marker, abort that landing and reposition for another one. Lastly – do remember that the rudder, particularly on slippery runway conditions, plays a very useful role in executing a successful landing roll. It would be a shame to execute a perfect touch down only to end up sideways or worst still take the undercarriage off because you failed to contain an initial small swing on the landing roll! Remember that brakes will lock up on soft surfaces and should be avoided. **As with the take-off consider using either left or right of the runway centreline.**

Freezing Conditions

If the temperature drops below freezing it is obvious that surfaces will become icy. Although a thorough assessment is carried out on the daily aerodrome inspection all pilots should be aware that surfaces (concrete in particular) will pose a risk if due diligence and awareness does not prevail. This risk is managed by the promulgation of signs and notices designed to heighten awareness of such conditions. Extreme care must be taken both when walking and taxiing on icy surfaces. Extra care should be taken when manoeuvring on the apron where **taxiing should be at a dead slow walking pace.**