

GA1330

Posted on 28.02.2023 by Steve Forward

Category: [General Aviation](#)

Report Title Runway markings

Initial Report

I was returning to my familiar home base with a setting sun to the west for a landing on one of the westerly parallel runways (there being no discerning separation between the two runways other than the numbers on the thresholds which are painted white). In the half-light it was difficult to make out the runways and I initially lined up on the taxiway (also grass). I pointed out this potential hazard to ATC who said to repaint the numbers would involve closing the runway and inconveniencing the pilot fraternity! The controller complained of the need to weed the area first and repaint the numbers. Unless something is done about it I believe there will be an incident. At [Airfield] there does not appear to be any formal process to pursue the local ATC to maintain the runways to a suitable standard. Lesson learned: Positively identify the runway before commencing an approach but if there is a lack of markings it would still prove too difficult.

Comment

In light of the Airfield Manager's subsequent comments it appears that the issue has been recognised and hopefully resolved. However, it appears that the processes for doing so were not clear to all operators and there may be value in refreshing communications links so that all parties are aware of how to raise such issues and with whom; off-hand comments from others are not helpful and it would have been more useful if the reporter had been pointed towards the formal reporting processes. In safety terms, the problems associated with landing into a low sun are well known, especially in the winter months, and this needs to be taken into account during a pilot's and Airfield Manager's/ATC's TEM considerations. In light wind conditions it may be advantageous to offer pilots a landing on another out-of-sun runway if available (taking note of any crosswind considerations) or even land in the opposite direction on the runway in use if they are able to comply (being appropriately cautious of any tailwind component that might result, no matter how little it might be). If there are runway/approach lights available then consider setting them to bright – even if they are on an adjacent paved runway they can give a visual indication of where an unlit grass runway is for those familiar with the airfield. Good quality sunglasses and a peaked cap can also help, and don't be afraid to go around if unsure – you will be more likely to recognise the line-up features you're looking for on the subsequent approach.

Key Issues

Dirty Dozen Human Factors

The following 'Dirty Dozen' Human Factors elements were a key part of the CHIRP discussions about this report and are intended to provide food for thought when considering aspects that might be pertinent in similar circumstances.

Resources – runway markings insufficiently clear for task

Distraction – capacity diverted by uncertainty over runway location

Communication – sub-optimal communication of safety reporting processes

lack_of_resourcesResources

distractionDistraction

poor_communicationCommunication



