

Safety Bulletin

16 May 2011 (Re-issued 26 October 2012)

(Modified to incorporate introduction of Stop Bars at Sydney)

Holding Point Lighting Confusion

Reports indicate that pilots may be confused in some circumstances about the type of holding point lighting in use at towered airports. This confusion may have operational consequences by causing delays or other problems.

The following two examples have been selected from recent reports to highlight the issue:

- “The Aerodrome Controller sent [Aircraft 1] around due to [Aircraft 2’s] delayed response to a crossing clearance issued by Ground. [Aircraft 2] started to cross the runway as instructed and then stopped and queried ATC as to ‘why the lights were still on?’ By this stage the aircraft was marginally over the holding point line and the Aerodrome Controller elected to send [Aircraft 1] around.”
- “Delay on line-up by [Aircraft 3]. The aircraft didn’t move and then when queried there was reference to the Stop Bars not being extinguished. The Aerodrome Controller advised [Aircraft 3] that they were runway guard lights and not Stop Bars per se.”

Pilots may encounter the following types of holding point lighting at Australian airports:

Lighting type	Displays as...
Stop Bars	Red steady lights across the taxiway, extinguished when runway entry is permitted. (Note 1: Verbal clearance also required to enter runway.) (Note 2: Currently only installed at Melbourne and Sydney.)
Runway Guard Lights (RGLs)	Configuration A: Flashing yellow sidelights (‘wig-wags’).
	Configuration B: Alternately flashing yellow lights across the taxiway.
Intermediate Holding Point Lights	Where taxiway centreline lighting is used – a short array (3 lights) of yellow steady lights across the taxiway.
	Where taxiway edge lights are used – yellow steady edge lights.

Notes:

1. These lights may also be used in combination, e.g. Stop Bars with RGLs Config A; RGLs Configs A and B together.
2. Operational experience overseas has shown that in certain ambient lighting conditions colour confusion can occur between yellow and red holding point lighting as the colour tones can appear very similar.



Figure 1 left: Holding point with yellow steady Intermediate Holding Point Lights.
Figure 2 above: Holding point with Runway Guard Lights Configuration A (wig wags).

Stop Bars

Stop Bars have been commissioned at Melbourne and Sydney airports. Stop Bar implementation was intended to yield a safety benefit in reducing the incidence of runway incursions by providing a visual/procedural barrier to unintended runway entry.



Figure 3: Stop Bars - a transverse row of red lights on the taxiway. Currently only found in Australia at Melbourne and Sydney Airports.

Hold Short Lights

Hold Short Lights ('LAHSO Lights') are another type of holding lighting that may be encountered. They are found at aerodromes that use Land and Hold Short Operations (LAHSO) procedures. Hold Short Lights are inset lights located across the runway at the hold short line for an intersecting runway. Hold Short Lights are white and occult.

It is a requirement for ATC to have the Hold Short Lights illuminated at all times during LAHSO operations, but aircraft are only required to hold short of the lights (and intersecting runway) if they have been given an instruction to do so. This instruction is normally given with the landing clearance and any conflicting traffic will also be included with the instruction. If you are not given an instruction to hold short via a directed transmission, then you should ignore the Hold Short Lights and use the runway as required.



Figure 4: Hold Short Lights ('LAHSO Lights') are located on the runway, are white in colour and occult.

Holding Point Lighting for Unlit Runways

At some towered aerodromes at night it is necessary to cross an unlit runway that is not in use to get to or from the (lit) runway in use. At the unlit runway crossings, lit holding points may not be provided although a clearance to cross an unlit runway is still required. It is therefore necessary to look carefully for holding point signage and painted markings.

Summary

- Melbourne and Sydney are currently the only Australian airports with Stop Bar lighting.
- An illuminated Stop Bar (**red lights**) **must not** be crossed under any circumstances.
- At Towered aerodromes, holding points with **yellow lights** only, may be crossed once in receipt of an ATC clearance or instruction.
- Holding short during LAHSO is only required if given a specific instruction by ATC to do so.
- Watch carefully for holding point signage and painted markings when operating at night as holding points for runways not in use may not be lit.

Further Information

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