



## AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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March 14, 2007

VIA FACSIMILE

Mr. Michael J. Geiger  
Airport Director, Republic Airport  
7150 Republic Airport  
Room 216  
East Farmingdale, NY 11735-3930

Dear Mr. Geiger:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interest of 411,000 members nationwide with 14,632 members residing in the state of New York. On behalf of our members, we are submitting this letter to address perceived security concerns relating to motor vehicle access to Republic Airport ramp areas by based tenants. This is in follow up to our meeting of February 8, 2007.

AOPA believes that each airport is unique with specific issues and requirements for security. Some airports need to have fencing, access control points, badges and other security related procedures, and many others may use lesser amounts or even none of those methods. The AOPA Airport Watch Program, developed in concert with the Transportation Security Administration has been widely accepted by general aviation airport operators and tenants in helping to ensure that these airports are safe and secure.

It is our strong belief that it is appropriate and legitimate to continue to allow tenants to have access to the ramps at the airport. More general aviation airports allow vehicle access by tenants than restrict it. New security measures at the airport as well as the expanded use of AOPA's proven Airport Watch Program will help the entire airport. The implementation of the current security upgrade projects, integrated motion and camera systems will work to decrease the chance of access to airport operational areas by people who are not authorized on the ramp. Additionally, new access gates, upgrading badges and offering recurrent training in airport security will also assist in this regard. All of these actions will greatly reduce unauthorized access to the airport operations area.

During our meeting, you specifically asked us to help you answer several questions including - "Why are they (vehicles) allowed on the ramp?" Vehicle access to the ramp by based tenants is a legitimate need for access to their aircraft by those tenants. But, in order to expand on this need, we elected to conduct additional research. We posed this question to local pilots, airport managers in New York State, selected airports nationally and found a myriad of reasons and methods for allowing vehicles on the ramp.

First, tenants who base their aircraft at a public-use airport are paying for access to the aircraft they store in the hangars and on the tie-downs. Use of an automobile to deliver passengers and baggage directly to their airplane allows them to minimize their time preparing the aircraft for departure or departing the airport once they return from a trip, maintain control over their passengers and not burdening airport staff and resources with requests for escorts or dedicated transport. By keeping small children, pets and the elderly in a car, the risk of an accident from a wandering pedestrian is minimized both to the airport and to the passengers.

Second, as many of your existing tenants at Republic Airport have already expressed to you, they utilize their vehicles to preheat their aircraft in the winter and carry tools that they use to perform preventive maintenance (which is authorized by the FAA and the airport must allow) year round. Repeated walks to and from a parking lot are counter-productive and increase the aggravation factor. In times of poor weather conditions – especially during winter months – walking long distances could well pose safety concerns with hazardous weather conditions.

Third, tenants' aircraft represent investments of tens and hundreds of thousands of dollars. They have a strong personal interest to prevent people with bad intentions from gaining access to their aircraft. Pilots pay attention to what is going on around their aircraft and are the first line of defense in determining if something is out of place. This increased awareness is the cornerstone of the AOPA Airport Watch Program.

A quote from one tenant of Republic Airport illustrates this:

*"Another is the fact that when I do see people using the pedestrian gate I will usually look for the flight bags. This is a throw back to my training days when all the other students seemed like my peers and comrades. And the fact is that when I see someone using the gate without gear or strange gear it sends up a red flag "where do they fit in, teacher? student? passenger with the gate code? Owner/operators typically drive to their spots and we have all kinds of gear, boxes, and tools that we drive and not carry to our spots. If not allowed to drive to our planes people, carrying strange looking bags, boxes and tools onto the ramp will become so normal that each one of us will not give it a second thought after a while. And that is a break down in security."*

We believe that rather than prohibiting all motor vehicle operations on the airport's ramp area, a comprehensive training program designed to highlight potential areas of conflict between aircraft and vehicles and offer reasonable solutions for them would work well to improve ramp safety and security. Enforcement of existing driving rules on Republic Airport using a graduated series of restrictions ultimately resulting in banning the use of the offending party's automobile on the ramp for some defined period of time would provide tenants with an incentive to operate vehicles safely on airport property.

An excellent example of a comparable airport to Republic Airport, which does allow vehicle access to based tenants, is Martin State Airport in Baltimore, MD. It is a state-owned, designated reliever airport with 255-based aircraft including 28 jets and has a single 6,996' runway with a control tower. It is also located inside the Washington, DC Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ), which is an area subject to intense scrutiny with specific procedures in place to allow pilots to operate to and from this airport. This area is one of the highly regulated and restricted aviation operational areas in the nation. Yet, vehicle access is allowed.

At Martin State pilots pass through a manned gate and show their picture identification or drivers license. They state their business or give their destination on the airport. A quick inspection of the vehicle follows. The pilot then drives to their T-hangar/tie-down or goes about their business. The airport management is quick to enforce the 15 mph driving rule either in person or using the guards and there are lines painted around the big hangars on the ramp to guide vehicle traffic. The control tower also assists in monitoring vehicle action on the ramp and will contact the guards or management if they notice an infraction.

According to a survey conducted by the New York Airport Managers Association with approximately 30 respondents, many indicated that they allow vehicles some form of access to their ramps. These include Elmira/Corning Regional Airport, a non-hub primary airport and Orange County Airport, a general aviation airport with more than 240 based aircraft.

An informal survey conducted on the Cessna Pilot Association and Cessna Pilot Society online forums by an AOPA member and Republic tenant revealed that there are too many airports across the country to list that also allow vehicles on their ramps; some limited to based tenants and others not restricted in any way. The airports are very diverse and represent a good cross section from general aviation airports. With one exception, the information provided by this survey indicated that general aviation pilots based at these airports could access their aircraft using a vehicle, drive on the ramp and not be forced to park outside the fence and hike to their aircraft. The single exception, Essex County Airport in Caldwell, NJ allows vehicles on the ramp after prior coordination with airport management. The tabulated results of this survey are attached to this letter.

AOPA believes that there is no reason to restrict legitimate vehicular access to aircraft based at Republic by local tenants. It is our strong belief that vehicle access by based tenants is not a security risk or issue in any way but rather one of local tenants following the rules. Accordingly, we strongly encourage the airport management to consider these other airports examples and while employing good security practices and safe airport driving rules continue to allow vehicle access on the ramps at Republic Airport.

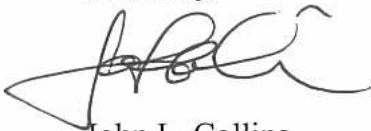
Mr. Michael J. Geiger

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Thank you for your consideration of our views on this issue. We look forward to continuing to work with you to reach an equitable solution that will meet the needs of all parties at Republic Airport.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Collins', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the left.

John L. Collins  
Senior Liaison  
Airports

cc:

Subimal Chakraborti, Regional Director, Region 10, NYS DOT

Shelley M. LaRose-Arken, Airport Manager, Republic Airport

Craig Dotlo, AOPA Northeast Regional Representative

Peter McWilliams, AOPA Airport Support Network Volunteer FRG

Attachment

State	ID	Name	NPIAS	Based AC	Ops	# Runways	ATCT	Acreage	Vehicles	Part 139
CA	CMA	Camarillo	R	564	153,360	1	Y	650	Y	N
CA	RHV	Reid Hillview of SCC	R	690	230,000	2 //	Y	179	Y	N
CA	SJC	San Jose Intl	P-M	175	219,268	3 (2 //)	Y	1,050	Y	Y
CA	SMX	Santa Maria Public	P-N	224	71,523	2	Y	2,156	Y	Y
CT	BDR	Igor I Sikorsky Meml.	GA	242	67,270	2	Y	800	Y	Y
FL	FXE	Ft. Lauderdale Exec.	R	671	261,163	2	Y	1,050	Y	N
FL	SFB	Orlando Sanford Intl.	P-S	361	316,537	4 (3 //)	Y	2,200	Y	Y
FL	TMB	Kendall-Tamiami	R	412	186,653	3 (2 //)	Y	1,380	Y	N
GA	PDK	DeKalb-Peachtree	R	553	202,491	4 (2 //)	Y	745	Y	N
IL	CPS	St. Louis Downtown	R	268	170,000	3 (2 //)	Y	940	Y	N
MA	OWD	Norwood Memorial	R	240	100,000	2	Y	688	Y	N
MD	MTN	Martin State	R	255	90,136	1	Y	747	Y	N
MI	PTK	Oakland County Intl.	R	784	243,395	3 (2 //)	Y	750	Y	Y
MO	SGF	Springfield-Branson	P-S	177	85,008	2	Y	2,750	Y	Y
MO	SUS	Spirit of St. Louis	R	416	146,145	2 //	Y	1,300	Y	Y
NJ	CDW	Essex County	R	304	245,872	2	Y	275	N	N
NY	FRG	Republic	R	514	189,361	2	Y	526	Y	Y
OR	PDX	Portland International	P-M	77	259,388	3 (2 //)	Y	3,000	Y	Y
TN	TYS	McGhee Tyson	P-S	136	138,682	2 //	Y	2,250	Y	Y
TX	ADS	Addison	R	752	148,708	1	Y	368	Y	N
TX	DAL	Dallas Love Field	P-M	598	234,615	3 (2 //)	Y	1,300	Y	Y
TX	DWH	David Wayne Hooks	R	289	223,585	2 //	Y	480	Y	N
TX	TKI	Collin County Regnl	R	208	120,120	1	Y	580	Y	N
VA	HEF	Manassas Regional	R	371	150,000	2 //	Y	852	Y	N
WA	RNT	Renton Municipal	R	300	113,104	1	Y	170	Y	N

State	ID	Security Info
CA	CMA	Gates, magnetic code card limited to FBO's and A/C owners, cameras at the gates
CA	RHV	Fence, gates, keypad
CA	SJC	Gate, badge/key, 30 minute security CBT, picture ID check for no-fly, bumper sticker
CA	SMX	Gates, slide key and radio transmitters, ramp tags
CT	BDR	Gates, card readers, photo ID to get access badge
FL	FXE	Gate, magnetic card, permits
FL	SFB	Gates, cameras, keycard w/PIN, drivers license & fingerprints, 30 minute video and test, auto tag
FL	TMB	Fencing, FBO's have electronic gates with keypad
GA	PDK	Gates, keycards open all gates
IL	CPS	Gates, keypad
MA	OWD	Gates, Picture ID access card w/PIN, cameras, proof of A/C ownership or business on field, auto safety handbook review
MD	MTN	Gate, picture ID, vehicle check
MI	PTK	Gates, photo ID key, ramp access controlled by FBO
MO	SGF	Gates, keycard, occasional human check of keycard and picture ID
MO	SUS	Gates, key pad
NJ	CDW	Gates, keycard, prior arrangements w/ airport management for loading/unloading vehicles
NY	FRG	Gate, permit/tag
OR	PDX	Gates, GA badge accesses GA area only, can drive to hangar, 30 minute security class & limited background check
TN	TYS	Gate, keycard keyed to gate nearest hangar, video cameras
TX	ADS	Gates, key code, liability insurance for vehicles, city police patrol airport
TX	DAL	Gate, display airport ID, FBO escort to and from hangar
TX	DWH	West side - no gates, most of action, east side - apartment type gate with keypad
TX	TKI	Gate, keypad
VA	HEF	Gate, RF card keyed to gate nearest A/C, \$10 fee with picture ID and proof of A/C ownership, current address
WA	RNT	Gates, key card, register w/Airport Mgr, take written test every 2 years