

Aircraft Interception On an Airport

Strategies for Being Prepared

Establish relationships with entities that can provide support and information

- Fixed Base Operators (FBO's)
 - These businesses provide parking and fuel services for aircraft
 - They know pilots and aircraft intimately
- AOPA Airport Support Network volunteer
 - The majority of pilots belong to the the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA)
 - Nearly every airport has an AOPA Airport Support Network Volunteer whose role in part is to establish communication channels with official parties interested in the airport
 - Contact AOPA at AOPA.org/asn
- FAA control tower personnel
- Airborne unit, pilots in department/ city management

Train dispatchers / officers to verify the subject aircraft has not received a re-assigned FAA registration number

- <http://www.faa.gov/>
 - N-number inquiry
- The information provided by El Paso Intelligence Center regarding aircraft is notoriously inaccurate
 - They do not confirm that the registration number has not been re-assigned

Train officers on the differences between a high risk traffic stop and an aircraft interception on an airport

- While intercepted automobiles are unpredictable, aircraft allowed to taxi to their intended destination on the airport will be more predictable
 - Increasing the opportunity for a successful apprehension
 - Decreasing the probability of the need to use weapons
- When parked at the intended destination at the airport, the pilot will immobilize the aircraft by
 - Chocking or chaining the aircraft down
 - Locking the doors
 - Walking away from the aircraft
- The only escape opportunity for the occupants at that point is on foot while inside a fenced security area, making a violent response disadvantageous



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Special Law Enforcement Officer Checklist

Confirm the dispatcher has verified that the subject aircraft has not received a re-assigned FAA registration number

- <http://www.faa.gov/>
 - N-number inquiry

Confirm the aircraft sought is the same make and model as the subject aircraft

- Model is extremely important—one company, Cessna, has made over 200 models and more than half of the single engine airplanes in the world
- Use subject matter experts for confirmation: tower, flight school, fixed base operator (FBO)

Recognize that having the tower direct an aircraft to a remote location on the airport that is not the intended destination on the airport may...

- Alert suspicious pilots
- Provide an opportunity for escape

Consider allowing the aircraft to immobilize itself by taxiing to the intended destination on the airport

- For transient aircraft there will usually be a limited number of possible FBOs. Station officers at each until the aircraft states intentions.
- At the FBO a small aircraft will usually be directed to a parking spot in the FBO parking area away from the building and bystanders (spots near the building are usually reserved for jets)
 - The FBO can provide assistance to ensure this happens without arousing suspicion
- At the parking spot allow the occupants to secure the aircraft
 - Shut the engine(s) off and walk away from the aircraft
 - In most cases they will also chock the wheels, chain the aircraft down, and / or lock the doors

Consider whether high-risk traffic stop procedures at the aircraft are appropriate

- If the system became aware of the aircraft because they filed a flight plan, they had broadcast their identity and intentions to official agencies and the public, making themselves predictable
- The occupants have no vehicle in which to escape, making a violent response disadvantageous to them

