

The Importance of Runway Friction Readings

following FAA changes to Airport Condition Reporting in October 2016.

Recent changes to the process of assessing and reporting airport runway conditions are discussed by the FAA in the following webinar:

Title: Airport Condition Reporting and the Runway Condition Assessment Matrix (RCAM)

Presented by: HQ FAA / Office of Airports

Presented to: Airport operators and stakeholders

Date: 8 Sep 2016

Link: <https://www.faa.gov/tv/?mediaId=1395>

Although runway friction readings - such as those obtained by the Bowmonk AFM2 - no longer need to be included with every Field Condition (FICON) report submitted to the NOTAM system, the FAA advises that **friction assessments should still be used**.

Quoting from 18 minutes and 5 seconds into the FAA's webinar:

"We are no longer reporting friction values. We want to emphasize that that does not mean we don't want you to do friction assessments. Friction assessments are a very important part of the assessment process because it still gives you trending information."

The Runway Condition Assessment Matrix (RCAM) tool generates Runway Condition Codes based on the contaminants observed on the runway. However, friction readings - along with vehicle deceleration or directional control observations, and pilot reported braking action - can be used to validate or downgrade a Runway Condition Code from that generated by considering contaminants alone. Friction readings are therefore a vital tool in the airport operator's arsenal to ensure that they are not over-estimating the condition of a runway and therefore compromising safety.

Conversely, friction readings *must* still be submitted to the NOTAM system if a Runway Condition Code (based on contaminants) is 0 or 1 and the airport wishes to upgrade this score. Without a friction reading it is not possible to upgrade the Runway Condition Code of a runway, which could therefore remain closed or unused unnecessarily.

Also note that Runway Condition Codes generated by the RCAM are only for paved runways – not for non-paved runways or for taxiways, ramps, heliports, or any low-speed environment. Friction readings are therefore extremely useful for these environments too.

The BOWMONK AFM2 is a compact, portable electronic instrument for measuring and recording the maximum deceleration possible on an airport runway or road surface. For more information visit: <http://www.bowmonk.com/products/view/bowmonk-afm2-airfield-friction-meter>.