DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Federal Aviation Administration

John Wayne Tower
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John Wayne Tower

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Letter to Airmen: LTA-SNA-5

Subject: Overshooting Parallel Runway Final/Correct Runway Alignment

Cancellation: 12/29/2023 1200 (UTC)

Attention has been focused on airports with closely spaced parallel runways because of a May 12, 2021 midair collision at Centennial Airport (APA), and a July 17, 2022 midair collision at North Las Vegas Airport (VGT). Both events involved an aircraft overshooting the final to their assigned runway while simultaneous operations to parallel runways were in use.

These midair collisions are a stark reminder for both pilots and controllers of the safety risk posed when a pilot turning base overshoots the extended centerline of the assigned runway during simultaneous parallel runway operations. It is imperative that pilots:

- Fly a proper downwind, base, and final (oval/rectangle, not a 270 degree continuous turn) allowing enough time and distance to be in level flight on the downwind, to establish a stabilized, descent, at a reasonable rate of descent, while maintaining spatial orientation to the runway and its extended centerline (ground track for the final). Furthermore, complete a rollout to wings level on base for orientation purposes and traffic scanning, while allowing time to make the turn to final approach without overbanking (generally 30 degrees of bank max).
- Listen and scan. Know the location of other traffic. Consider starting your base to final turn sooner to avoid possible overshoot. SNA tower routinely operates with two Local controllers, with the opposing pattern for each runway on a separate tower frequency. Pilots listening for awareness may not hear instructions issued to traffic landing the parallel runway, but controllers will routinely issue traffic advisories pointing out the traffic on base leg or final landing the parallel runway.

SNA parallel runways are 500 feet apart, centerline to centerline. Care should be used to visually acquire the runway numbers of the assigned runway stated in accepted clearances.

Runway 20L arrivals fly final at 15 degree angle to runway; Runway 20L departures turn 15 degrees left at departure end of runway. To avoid overflights of Runway 02L, Runway 02R departures turn 15 degrees right at departure end of runway. Aircraft landing 20L, use caution for jet blast from aircraft holding between Runway 20L and Runway 20R at Taxiway L. Consider the following when approaching the downwind, base, and final legs:

- Wind direction and speed (tailwind or crosswind)
- Aircraft performance
- Aircraft speed
- High wing vs low wing visibility issues
- Avoid distractions
- If you have overshot final, you think you may have overshot final, or if your approach is not stabilized, consider initiating a go around
- Ask ATC if you have any doubt about the runway you are cleared to land on, or if you are unsure whether or not you are aligned with the correct runway

- Study and use the airport diagram for situational awareness while on the ground and in the air
- Plan ahead, get to know the airport by viewing the SNA From the Flight Deck Video at Runway Safety – John Wayne/Orange County Airport (SNA) (faa.gov) (https://www.faa.gov/airports/runway_safety/videos/sna/) or (https://www.faa.gov/sna (https://www.faa.gov/sna))

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