

Turn Your Lights On

These days, runway incursion avoidance is a big deal. The FAA is doing everything it can by educating pilots and controllers so we don't run into one another on the ground. It's such a safety priority that the FAA has made it a required task in the CFI PTS as well as dedicating an entire Appendix to the subject in the Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge. I find that most pilots are not aware of the relatively new requirements for turning on their lights and transponders during ground operations. Sometimes this gets pointed out during check rides - which is not how most of us like to learn new things. The Airman's Information Manual has also grown in space dedicated to the subject, the details of which can be found in AIM 4-3-20 and 4-3-23. Recently, the FAA issued a Safety Alert for Operators (SAFO) further clarifying the somewhat ambiguous language in the AIM regarding transponder operation on the ground. The safety alert can be found at

http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/safo/all_safos/media/2015/SAFO15006.pdf

So here's the short version for those who don't enjoy reading FAA prose. Prior to taxi you should turn on the following (you did remember to turn your beacon/anti-collision lights on before engine start – right?)

Transponder on set to altitude reporting
ADSB enabled (if equipped)
Taxi lights on
Strobe lights on (unless it would adversely affect vision of other pilots)
Navigation lights on

When crossing a runway and prior to beginning the takeoff roll, landing lights should be turned on.

Try this out on your next flight and make it a habit from then on. Safe flying.

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