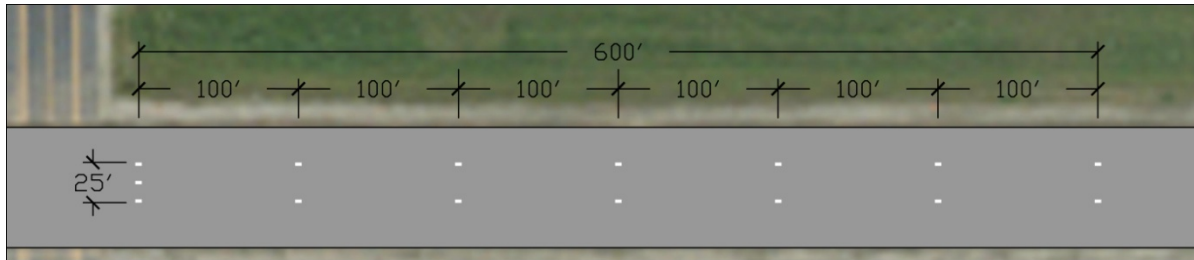


Practice Off-Field Landings at Home

**A test program this summer to practice off-field landings and take-offs
at Fairbanks International Airport**

Each year there are numerous aircraft accidents when pilots head for hunting camp or to their favorite off-field fishing spot. This year there is an effort under way to allow pilots to sharpen their skills before heading to the field. In a collaborative effort by the FAA, Fairbanks International Airport and several aviation organizations, pilots will have a chance to practice at home. A six hundred foot long by twenty five foot wide “practice runway” will be marked by shooting paint directly on the gravel surface. Pilots are welcome to make take-offs and landings to see if they can get down and stopped before running off the end of the marked area. Given that the markings are in the middle of a larger conventional runway surface, the consequences of not getting it right the first time are more to the ego than to the airplane, with the opportunity to try, try again. Ultimately, the pilot should know that they are “getting it right” before putting their airplane on the line on that short remote strip.

This is an experimental program. The FAA Airports Division has studied and approved the markings pattern shown below. Labor, equipment and expertise was supplied by the UAF Aviation Technology Program, Ninety-Nines, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association and the General Aviation Association at Fairbanks International Airport. Pilot feedback will be important to letting them know if this helps improve pilot skills, before taking on all the unknowns of a true off-field situation. A survey will be available online for pilots who used this facility to provide comments and observations.



Markings for a "Practice Runway" in a larger gravel runway.

The plan for this season is to create “practice runways” only on the ski-strips at Palmer and Fairbanks International Airport. This fall the proponents will review stakeholder feedback to evaluate the program, including the comments received from users, cost of the program, operational issues or other factors to see if this idea is worth continuing and expanding to other locations. Pilots are encouraged to use this new “tool” to help sharpen their skills, and let the airport know now you liked it!

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For more information, contact:

General Aviation Association at Fairbanks International Airport Ron Dearborn 907-455-6692

Fairbanks International Airport Angie Spear 907-474-2529

Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association Tom George 907-455-9000