Continental Luscombe Association

Gathering of Luscombes
Columbia Airport's Grass Runway 29
Guidelines for Use

One of the attractions of Columbia Airport is the grass runway which is 2600' long and 100' wide. Many pilots enjoy the opportunity to experience the feeling of a grass takeoff or landing. Pilots using the grass runway should follow these guidelines to help assure the safe operation of Columbia Airport.

1. The Runway 29 Object Free Area (OFA) has a width of 250' or 125' either side of the center line of the runway. This area must be kept free of any parked aircraft, vehicles, golf carts, people sitting in chairs, etc. This is an FAA requirement for the safety of landing aircraft and people on the ground. Orange cones will be located along these lines to identify the boundary of the OFA.

2. It is everyone's responsibility to make sure that the OFA is kept clear of parked aircraft, vehicles and pedestrians. Failure to observe the OFA requirement may result in closing the runway.

3. Runway 29 is left hand traffic and the pattern altitude is 800' AGL or 2900' MSL which is 200' below the Runway 17-35 pattern.

4. Always announce your location and intentions using proper radio procedures.

5. Keep an eye out for someone in the pattern flying without a radio (or using the wrong frequency).

6. The final approach to Runway 29 crosses the departure path of Runway 17. When landing on Runway 29, look and listen for traffic arriving and departing on both Runway 17 and Runway 35. A potential conflict with aircraft departing Runway 17 is our biggest safety concern.

7. The crosswind leg on Runway 29 conflicts with the downwind leg of Runway 17 so use extreme caution when departing Runway 29.

8. Landings on Runway 11 are discouraged because in the event of a go-around, the flight path crosses Runway 17-35.

9. Takeoffs for Runway 11 are prohibited because the departure path crosses Runway 17-35 and there is no direct line of sight between the thresholds of Runway 17 and Runway 11.

10. During "Type Club" events, touch and goes and low passes on the grass runway are discouraged due to the large number of aircraft using Columbia Airport.

11. Runway 29 has rising terrain and trees off the departure end. Verify your aircraft's performance and check the density altitude on the AWOS before you depart.

12. Don't back taxi on the grass runway if at all possible; it blocks the runway for other's use and adds wear and tear to the grass. Taxi off to the side of Runway 29.

13. Do not use hard braking on the grass runway because it tears up the grass. Also, avoid sharp turns or tailwheel pivot turns for the same reason, it tears up the grass.

14. When taxiing across Runway 17-35 use the following type of radio broadcasts to alert any traffic using Runway 17-35 of your crossing:
    a. "Luscombe 123 taxiing across Runway 17-35 at the windsock"
    b. "Luscombe 456 taxiing across Runway 17-35 at the threshold of Runway 29"
    c. "Luscombe 789 taxiing across Runway 17-35 to the threshold of Runway 29 for departure"

15. The CAL FIRE air tankers take off on Runway 17 and land on Runway 35. They have the right of way at all times except in an emergency. Our CAL FIRE aircraft use the following call signs; "Tanker 82", "Tanker 83", "Air Attack 440" and "Copter 404", however there could be other CAL FIRE aircraft using Columbia Airport.

16. The grass runway is not lighted and is not to be used at night

17. Do not drive vehicles across the grass runway. It is not designed to take the weight of a car tire which can damage the grass. If vehicles must cross the grass runway they should cross on the asphalt blast pad at the threshold of Runway 29. Vehicles should always give right of way to aircraft.

18. Please be a good neighbor and fly the proper pattern and altitude. Also use reduced propeller speeds to reduce noise. This significantly reduces the number of complaints we receive and pass on to you.

Keep in mind that many visiting pilots don't even know that there is a grass runway at Columbia Airport. They think that Runway 17-35 is the only runway. Columbia Airport has FOUR active runways (11, 17, 29 &35) which increases the potential for a near miss. So, stay alert, use your radio, and don't be afraid to do a slow 360 turn if needed.

For questions or comments regarding these use guidelines, please contact the Airport Administration Office at Columbia Airport at (209) 533-5685.