



Radiotelephony phraseology 'HOLD SHORT OF RUNWAY'

INTRODUCTION

Following numerous **misunderstandings** around the **phraseology 'Hold short of runway'** in the flying community, the issue needs to be further discussed and clarified. In Belgium, fourteen runway incursions have been caused since 2017. They have been provoked by the same difficulty to understand and comply with the standard instruction 'Hold short of (RWY XX)'. Although this wording is fully compliant with ICAO¹ (International Civil Aviation Organization) provisions, safety related occurrence investigations have proven the underlying failure linked to the phraseology (see table 1).

Despite former communication on this topic, the present leaflet further informs and emphasizes on the existing regulation, while highlighting different examples of runway incursions. Furthermore, it defines the phraseology 'Hold short of' as **'TO HOLD NOT CLOSER TO THE RUNWAY XX THAN THE RUNWAY HOLDING POINT'**.

	EBAW	EBBR	EBCI	Total
2017	2		2	4
2018	2	1		3
2019	3			3
2020	4			4
Total	11	1	2	14

Table 1: Number of runway incursions in Belgium per airport and per year caused by misunderstanding of 'Hold short of'

¹Doc 4444 Chapter 12, Phraseologies §12.3.4.7 TAXI PROCEDURES

HOW IS THIS FAILURE EXEMPLIFIED?

To illustrate the potential risks of the misunderstanding of the phraseology 'Hold short of runway', the BCAA (Belgian Civil Aviation Authority) and skeyes would like to draw the flying community's attention to certain aspects of several recent runway incursions.

EXAMPLE 1

A CESSNA - 525 called the lower frequency ready for departure.

Air controller: "C/S, good evening, hold short of RWY ## traffic on base".

CESSNA-525: "We hold short, C/S".

A landing traffic received clearance to land but the ATCO (Air Traffic Control Officer) noticed that the CESSNA - 525 already crossed the holding point. Landing traffic was thus given a go-around instruction.

EXAMPLE 2

The second example deals with special VFR conditions. A Boeing 737-800 was established on final and cleared to land still 2.5NM from touch-down. Just after this landing clearance issuance, a Piper PA28 at the holding point called the air controller, ready for departure.

PA28: "Tower, good afternoon, C/S is at holding point XX ready for departure".

Air controller: "C/S, hold short of RWY ##".

PA28: "Holding short of RWY ##, C/S".

The PA28 started to move forward to enter the active runway, passed the holding point, and stopped on the edge of the runway (just before the white line). As soon as the runway incursion was detected by the controller, the B737 at 1.7NM from touch-down was instructed to go-around.

This occurrence was a direct consequence of the wrong interpretation of the 'Hold short of RWY XX' phraseology. In this case, the pilot made a correct read-back. However, during his interview, he commented that, by hearing 'hold' and 'runway', he understood "to hold on the runway". This phraseology does not exist.

The only correct phraseology to enter the RWY is 'LINE UP (AND WAIT)', whereas 'HOLD SHORT OF' means to hold **not** closer than the RWY.

... clearance to enter runway and await take-off clearance	f) LINE UP [AND WAIT];
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12.3.4.8 HOLDING	‡a) HOLD (direction) OF (position, runway number, etc.);
	‡b) HOLD POSITION;
	‡c) HOLD (distance) FROM (position);
... to hold not closer to a runway than specified in Chapter 7, 7.6.3.1.3.1	‡d) HOLD SHORT OF (position);
	*e) HOLDING;
	*f) HOLDING SHORT.
	‡ Requires specific acknowledgement from the pilot.
	* Denotes pilot transmission. The procedure words ROGER and WILCO are insufficient acknowledgement of the instructions HOLD, HOLD POSITION and HOLD SHORT OF (position). In each case the acknowledgement shall be by the phraseology HOLDING or HOLDING SHORT, as appropriate.

Figure 1: Extract of ICAO DOC 4444 defining the two different phraseologies: 'Line up [and wait]' and 'Hold short of RWY'.

EXAMPLE 3

The controller let a PIPER - PA28 depart before authorizing the landing of a DIAMOND - DA42. Once the PIPER - PA28 checked in on the frequency, the PIPER's pilot gave the impression of not being confident enough and not being ready for an immediate take-off. Therefore, the controller had to change his plan and decided to hold the aircraft until the end of the next landing.

Air controller: "C/S, hold short of the RWY, one arrival in front" (no readback by PA28).

Air controller: "C/S to confirm to hold short of the RWY".

PA28: "Hold short (unreadable) RWY, C/S".

The ATCO cleared the DIAMOND - DA42 to land and noticed that the PIPER - PA28 crossed the holding point. The ATCO issued a go-around to the DIAMOND - DA42 at 2.73 NM final.

FURTHER DISCUSSION ON THE TOPIC

Additionally, the following discussion - found on a UK aviation forum for pilots - shows that the **misunderstanding is common** among pilots:

"(...) Maybe I missed this in training but I have never understood exactly what the ATC means when they ask you to "hold short". Does it mean hold for a short period of time, or does it mean hold short of the holding point. And how short is short? (...)"

CONCLUSION:

WHAT DOES THE PHRASEOLOGY 'HOLD SHORT OF THE RUNWAY' MEAN?

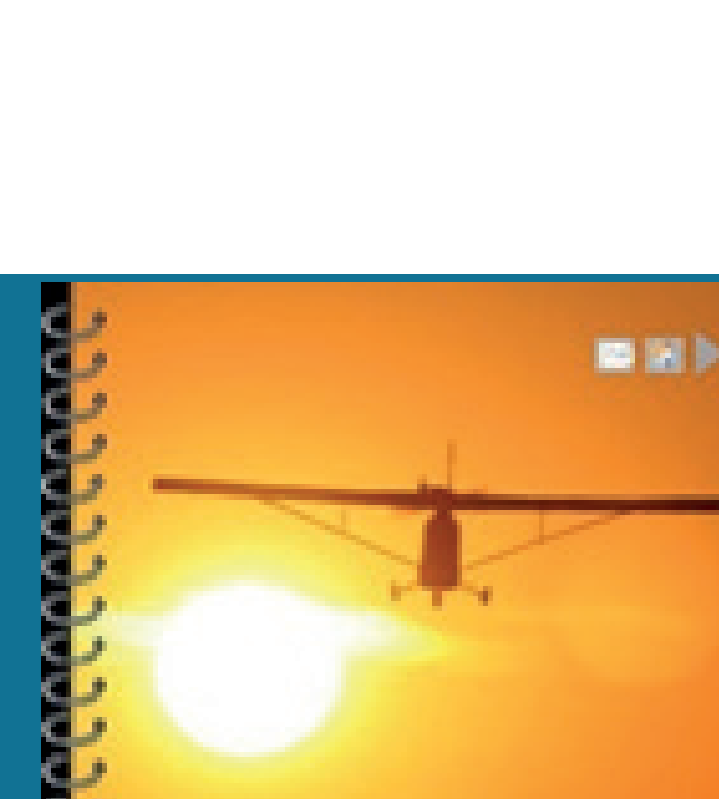
From these examples, the conclusion is clear: **'Hold short of runway' is not 100% clear for all users concerned. Therefore, BCAA and skeyes would like to remind the meaning of 'Hold short of Runway XX' as 'to hold not closer to the runway XX than the runway holding point'.**

'HOLD SHORT OF RWY XX'
means
TO HOLD NOT CLOSER TO THE RWY XX THAN THE RWY HOLDING POINT

A 'Hold short' instruction will never be combined with a 'line up' instruction. If a pilot is waiting for a line-up clearance on the holding position of a runway and is hearing the word 'hold' in the instruction, he should never assume that the ATC controller allows him to enter the runway. In the latter case, ATC will always use the phrase 'line up (and wait)'.

BCAA RECOMMENDS THE GUIDE TO PHRASEOLOGY FROM EGAST.

<https://www.easa.europa.eu/document-library/general-publications/egast-radiotelephony-guide-vfr-pilots>



Questions? Suggestions?
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GLOSSARY

ATC = Air Traffic Control
ATCO = Air Traffic Control Officer
BCAA = Belgian Civil Aviation Authority
EBAW = Antwerp Airport
EBBR = Brussels National Airport
EBCI = Brussels South Airport
ICAO = International Civil Aviation Organization
RWY = Runway
VFR = Visual Flight Rules

WHAT IS AN ASIL?

ASIL stands for Aviation Safety Information Leaflet. These leaflets are created and published by the Belgian Civil Aviation Authority (BCAA) in order to raise awareness and to promote aviation safety. They are also part of a larger frame aimed at achieving predetermined aviation safety objectives, including reports, flyers, posters, audiovisual material, manuals, conferences and promotional campaigns. These leaflets are often based on the safety analysis of occurrences reported in accordance with Regulation (EU) 376/2014 on the reporting, analysis and follow-up of occurrences in civil aviation.