AIRPORT SCARE: PLOW TRUCK DRIVES UNDER PLANE ON RUNWAY, NARROWLY AVOIDS ACCIDENT

News / Airports / Routes

Although there may not be a lot of planes taking off in the middle of the afternoon there is still always a lot of traffic on the runway at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.

Everything from fuel trucks to security cars move around the field, but only if they have permission from the tower.

But on Sunday night a snow plow driver for some reason went through a mandatory stop area and onto the runway.

"The driver, and the whole snow team who was operating that night, knew exactly where they were supposed to operate," Hopkins Airport Commissioner Fred Szabo said. "It seems that in this point in their investigation it has not finished and he became disoriented and not realize that he was moving into an active runway area."

On that runway was a passenger jet accelerating to take off. The jet cleared the plow but Szabo

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said what happened was just inexcusable. "Any incursion is a serious one. This one happened on the live runway which is an extreme issue and we're taking it very seriously."

Both the FAA and the airport are investigating how this could have happened. At this point, Szabo said they're reviewing security, signage and all aspects of operations on that night to get to the bottom of this. He said they're also looking at training to make sure that everyone remains on the same page for the rest of the winter.

"Whenever you have an incident like this you have to look to see if there are any factors that contributed to it. And even though it may be just a human error, to make sure we look at every conceivable aspect of what took place and training our individuals and hopefully it will never be repeated." Szabo said.

The driver, who has worked at the airport for many years, has been placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation.

Hopkins airport and the FAA just finished looking at other incursions and runway violations that occurred over the past few years. The FAA is considering whether not to fine the airport for these past incursions.

24 JANUARY 2016

SOURCE: FOX 8 NEWS
ARTICLE LINK:
https://50skyshades.com/index.php/news/airports-routes/airport-scare-plow-truck-drives-under-plane-on-runway-narrowly-avoids-accident

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