Rejected Takeoffs

Lately there seems to be a bit of confusion and questions concerning rejected takeoffs, what they are, and if they need to be reported. Before going into what a FAA reportable rejected takeoff is, we need to know how the FAA proceeds in investigating rejected takeoffs.

When our FAA CMO receives what is known as an Occurrence Report from the Air Traffic branch of the FAA, they are required to investigate to find a cause or reason in order to close out the report. This could involve the FAA looking into whatever records they may have, and it could also involve looking into the aircraft maintenance records to determine if there was a mechanical reason for the reported rejected takeoff. A proper AML entry by the crew could be very beneficial because it may be all the FAA needs to close out their investigation. Although an AML entry is not listed in FOM section 2-15 (mandatory reports) next to the “Any takeoff that is rejected, discontinued or cancelled by the flight crew” or the “Rejected takeoff” event categories, AML entries are required for ALL maintenance issues. AML entries are also helpful in tracking recurring problems and informing follow on crews of past mechanical issues. There is a history created.

It must be noted that not all rejected takeoffs are caused by mechanical issues. If the FAA does not find an AML entry, they will continue to look into other sources for information. This could be why the FOM has a provision for additional events in the mandatory reports, “Any takeoff that is rejected, discontinued, or cancelled by the flight crew after the aircraft has entered the runway” requires a mandatory submission of a FSR, and references note 1 below the list of mandatory reports. Remember also that an ASAP report fulfils the requirement of a FSR.

So what is or when will ATC submit an Occurrence Report for a rejected takeoff. The following examples may help explain that:

Scenario 1: As you are taxiing out, you are cleared for takeoff. You acknowledge and accept the clearance. But before you take the runway you encounter a problem that requires additional time to resolve. So you ask the tower for more time. Tower then cancels your takeoff clearance. Is this a FAA reportable rejected takeoff?

It could be. That would depend on whether the local ATC submitted an Occurrence Report or not. Some issues to consider would be: If the reason for the problem is mechanical then the crew would need to perform certain steps which could include any or all of the following: QRH, MEL, and/or PDM procedures which would necessitate an AML entry.

However, if the reason for cancelling the takeoff clearance and asking for additional time does not involve a mechanical reason, then an AML entry may not be required. As the FOM mandatory report event states, “Any takeoff that is rejected, discontinued or cancelled by the flight crew after the aircraft has entered the runway” stipulates having “entered the runway” which the aircraft has not, then a FSR may not be required in this instance. However, if ATC did
file an Occurrence Report and there is no AML write up or FSR submitted, the crew could be subsequently asked to submit a report so that the FAA can close out their investigation.

**Scenario 2:** As you taxi out, you are cleared for takeoff. You acknowledge and accept the clearance. After entering the departure runway you encounter an issue that requires you to ask for more time to resolve. ATC then cancels your takeoff clearance. Is this a FAA reportable rejected takeoff?

Probably yes, and a FSR would be required. As the aircraft has entered the departure runway a FSR would be required regardless of whether the reason was for mechanical or other factors. As it was the crew that cancelled the takeoff clearance, the mandatory reports event states that, “ANY takeoff that is rejected, discontinued or cancelled by the flight crew after the aircraft has entered the runway” would be controlling. Also keep in mind that other procedures and an AML entry may be required if the rejected takeoff was due to mechanical reasons.

**Scenario 3:** As you taxi out you are cleared for takeoff. You acknowledge and accept the clearance. Prior to entering the runway, ATC cancels your takeoff clearance. Is this a FAA reportable rejected takeoff?

More than likely not, and ATC probably would not report it on an Occurrence Report.

**Scenario 4:** You begin your takeoff roll. Subsequently tower calls you and tells you to stop your takeoff. Even if the tower was mistaken in telling the crew to stop their takeoff, as has happened to one of our B-757 crews during the week of June 14, would the submission of a FSR be required of the crew?

Yes. As this is obviously a rejected takeoff and not initiated by the crew, regardless of the cause, the mandatory report event “rejected takeoff” would be controlling which requires the submission of a FSR.

So what can a crew member take away from this?

1. Prior to entering the runway, refusing a takeoff clearance is not a rejected takeoff.

2. If after accepting a takeoff clearance and subsequently the crew cancels the takeoff clearance for whatever reason after entering the departure runway, a FSR is required (FOM 2-15). If the reason the crew canceled the takeoff clearance is due to a mechanical issue, follow the appropriate QRH/MEL/PDM procedures.

3. If after accepting a takeoff clearance and subsequently the crew cancels the takeoff clearance prior to entering the departure runway, a FSR may or may not be required. This would depend on whether ATC filed an Occurrence Report. If an Occurrence Report was filed, and there is no AML entry or FSR and the FAA requires more information in order to close their investigation, it is possible the crew might be asked to fill out a FSR.
4. Any mechanical irregularity requires an AML entry. If a mechanical reason was the cause of the rejected takeoff, do not rush. Take the time to follow all the appropriate QRH/MEL/PDM procedures. A proper AML entry not only aids the FAA in their investigation to close out the report but also helps track recurring mechanical problems.

5. If in doubt, refer to the FOM section 2-15 Mandatory Reports. Keep in mind that this is just a list of mandatory reports. A crew member can still submit a FSR or ASAP report when events arise that are not listed in FOM 2-15 or if there is confusion as to whether a report is required to be filled out or not.

Documentation by the crew is essential!

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