O’HARE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
CONVERGING RUNWAY OPERATIONS (CRO)

The FAA, at the recommendation of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)\(^1\), has recognized and taken action to address the safety issues associated with intersecting and converging runways. In April 2014, FAA implemented new rules\(^2\) at airports across the country to manage runways with converging flight paths to reduce conflicts, reduce risk and increase safety.

The goal of CRO is:

1. To create safe separation between departing and arriving aircraft on runways with converging flight paths, even if those runways do not physically intersect.

2. To create safer missed approach procedures for arriving aircraft on runways with departing aircraft from converging flight paths.

The CRO rules increased separation that effectively reduced the number of operations O’Hare can handle per hour. If not for the O’Hare Modernization Program (OMP), the impact of the FAA’s CRO rules would have been significantly more impactful to the airport’s capacity. It is estimated that with CRO in place, the current annualized arrival rate for O’Hare is 20 percent higher due to parallel runways opened in 2008 and 2013.

Parallel Runways Eliminate Intersecting and Converging Runway Operations

The use of intersecting runways reduces aircraft throughput rates and thus the capacity of the airport. More importantly, they increase operational safety concerns. Aware of these issues, the FAA further restricted converging operations at O’Hare in 2001 and 2014 in favor of a full parallel runway system. The need for crosswind runways has diminished over time due to modern aircraft advances. Modern hub airports now rely on parallel runway layouts for safe and efficient operations (see examples in the back page). In October 2015, the south airfield will be a modern, parallel system, but the north airfield includes a complex inefficient layout.

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\(^1\) NTSB Safety Recommendation A-13-024, July, 1, 2013

\(^2\) FAA Notices N JO 7110.652, N JO 7110.655, and N JO 7110.690