

# TALL TOWER

Presented to: FPAW

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Federal Aviation  
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# ISSUE

- **The United States observes visibility from two locations when there is a ATCT and a human observer (Not LAWRS)**
- **Surface visibility is always reported by machine or CWO**
- **Tower visibility is reported by the controller when either visibility is less than 4 miles**
- **Current reporting practice makes the lower of the two prevailing and reported in the body of the METAR/SPECI**



# ISSUE CONTD

- **Affected airports have towers over 200 feet and many over 300 feet**
- **Common decision height is 200 feet**
- **Tower cab may be in clouds with greatly reduced visibility, below minimums**
- **Surface visibility and ceiling may meet or exceed minimums**
- **A/C may not be able to shoot approach**
- **Dispatch may not be permitted**



# DISCUSSION

- **United States in only State in ICAO that reports tower visibility this way**
- **Visibility in body of METAR/SPECI, whether surface or tower, is designated prevailing**
- **NWS prepares forecasts based on prevailing visibility**
- **Airlines required to operate on the prevailing visibility**
- **Surface visibility usually more indicative than tower visibility of what pilot will see at decision height**



# POSSIBLE SOLUTION, ONE

- **Change weather reporting to conform with ICAO SARPs**
- **Always report surface visibility in body of METAR/SPECI (prevailing)**
- **Report tower visibility in REMARKS when either is below 4 miles**



# POSSIBLE SOLUTION TWO

- **Have NWS forecast to surface visibility no matter where it appears in the report**



# POSSIBLE SOLUTION THREE

- Amend FAA directives to secure changes in procedures to allow:
  - A/C to shoot approach based on surface visibility
  - Dispatch A/C based on surface visibility

