

Aerodrome markings

Everyone knows what a runway looks like. You know, that long straight, sometimes flat, sealed bit with piano keys and numbers and a dotted line up the middle, and trees, fences and powerlines at each end. But how well can you identify all the markings on an airfield? Runway and taxiway markings, strip markings, signs.

Edge (runway or strip) markings

The runway strip is an area including the runway and anything between 30 and 150 metres either side, and 30 to 60 metres at each end, that is nice and flat and obstacle-free, to reduce the risk of damage if you run off the runway, and to protect aircraft flying over it on takeoff, landing or missed approach.

Runway gable or cone markers are white. On an unsealed runway, especially grass, where there is a lack of contrast between the runway and the runway strip, the markers are put on the sides of the runway. If the difference between the runway and the runway strip is clearly defined (such as at Northam, with a sealed runway and grass runway strip), you don't need gable markers to show you where the runway is, so instead the markers are used to define the edges of the runway strip.

Incidentally, under RACWA's SOP's, an aircraft is not allowed to land if there is another aircraft within the runway strip. The holding point for Runway 14 at Northam is within the strip, so if you're taxiing to it, and you know there's someone on approach, you may choose to hold before the holding point so you're not within the strip.

If taxiway or apron edges are not clearly defined, yellow cones are used to mark the edges.

Runway markings

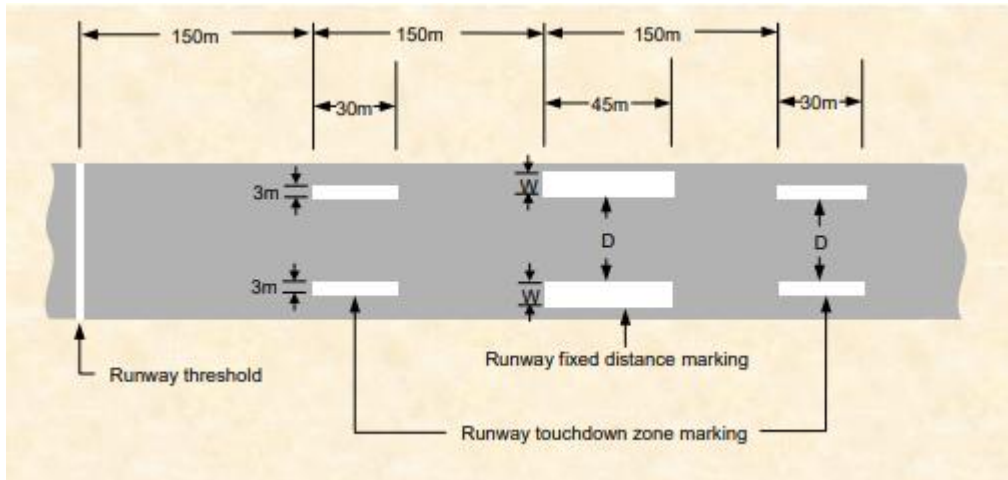
Numbers

As you know, runway designations are based on the magnetic heading of the runway, rounded to the nearest 10 degrees, which means you can check your compass on line-up. On parallel runways such as at Jandakot you'll also have an L, C or R as appropriate.

The exception is if the numbers may cause confusion, such as at Perth, where the runway with a magnetic heading of 016 is called 03, not 02. To have Runways 02 and 20 at an international airport would be asking for trouble.

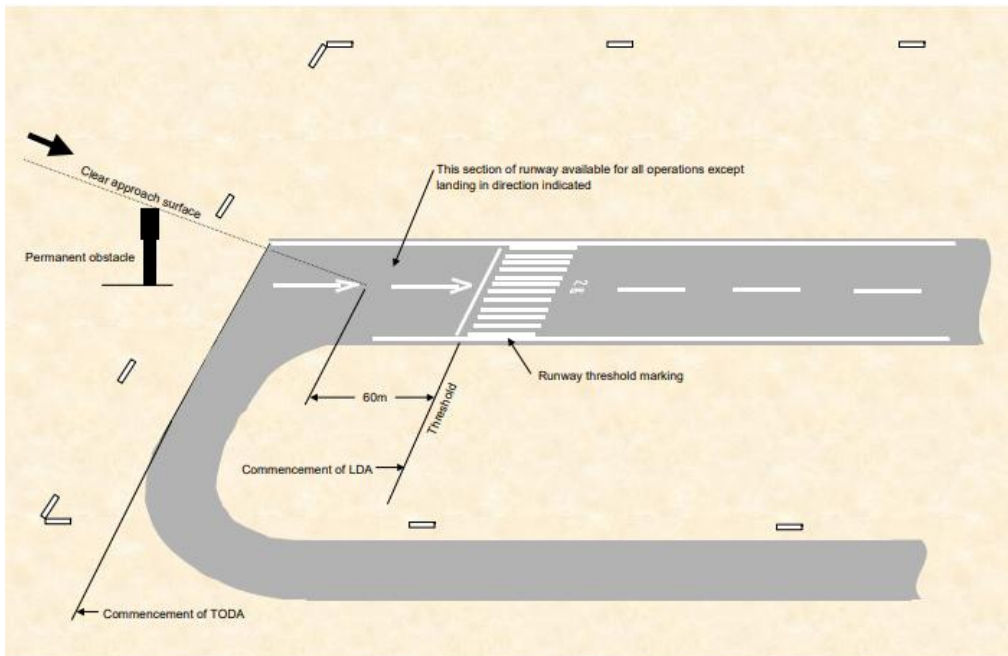
Touchdown zone markings

On runways that have touchdown zone markings, the markings are most commonly as shown below. The first set, 3m wide, is 150m from the threshold. The second set, 6m wide on a 30m wide runway such as 06L/24R at Jandakot, or 9m wide on a 45m wide runway such as at Perth, is 300m from the threshold. The third set looks like the first set and is 450m in.



Displaced thresholds

Permanently displaced thresholds look the same as normal thresholds, with a white line and piano keys, but the thing to look for is the arrows pointing from the start of the bitumen to the piano keys. The usual reason is obstacles or higher ground on approach, such as at both ends of the runway at Northam, or 24R at Jandakot. All of the sealed surface is available for takeoff, but the landing area starts at the piano keys. Landing before that with a club instructor in the right-hand seat will cost you a six-pack on a normal flight, or a carton on a Flight Review.



Signs

Taxiway and runway signs use standard colours. The most common, and the only ones you need to worry about at a place like Jandakot, are as shown below.

Runway signs are white on red, such as 06L below. The sign also shows the takeoff run remaining.

The yellow on black sign shows the taxiway you're on, and the black on yellow sign shows the one you're crossing, or turning onto. So the runway sign in the photo says you're on taxiway Bravo 1, you're at the holding point for Runway 06 Left, and you have 1265 metres of runway available from there. The sign in the foreground says you're on taxiway Bravo and you're crossing Bravo 1.



If you want to see many more different markings and signs than we've covered here, you can always go to Perth. But since it costs a heap to land there, and since they still want you to wear a mask in the terminals, we'll leave that out of the discussion.

Happy flying, and remember, never be scared to "Request taxi guidance."