



FAA Adds Maine Weather Cameras to Its Site

1



Hosted this week by System Operations

Story written by Jim Tise, FAA Communications

The FAA's Weather Camera Program has expanded to the northeast coast of the United States for the first time.

The FAA is now hosting 18 camera sites in Maine on its [weather camera site](https://weathercams.faa.gov/) (<https://weathercams.faa.gov/>), with more sites to be added through 2023.

LifeFlight of Maine, which provides medical evacuation service to the state, operates the camera sites. Josh Dickson, LifeFlight's director of aviation services, said his goal is to have a camera at every airport in the state and at a few of the "pinch points" over higher terrain.

"We see airports as a healthcare facility that allows us to fly an on-demand hospital into a community when it is needed," said Dickson.

The cameras provide pilots with better weather information, especially in terrain where radar coverage is scarce. As importantly, said Dickson, is that the cameras allow his pilots to assess runway conditions at airports.

"When we are trying to get a baby out of rural Maine at 3 a.m., we need to know what the runway looks like," explained Dickson. He noted that most of the airports are unmonitored and do not have current notice to air missions declaring surface conditions, which leaves important questions that need to be answered.

"Can we send an aircraft, and if so, what kind?" Dickson asked rhetorically. "We need to be able to see if a runway has been plowed. Is there a moose standing in the middle of the runway? Is there precipitation not showing up on the radar? Our cameras can tell us all of that."

The FAA's Weather Camera Program has proved a tremendous success over the past decade. It began in Alaska and has expanded to Hawaii and the continental United States, or CONUS. "Our momentum is really good right now," said Cohl Pope, program manager. "There's going to be more." He estimates the potential for an additional 330 sites across Alaska, Hawaii and CONUS.



LifeFlight of Maine infrastructure engineer John Rolfson installs one of the new weather cameras on top of the flight tower at the Brunswick Executive Airport.



Josh Dickson, LifeFlight of Maine director of aviation services

For instance, the state of Montana has installed cameras at a dozen sites, adding “little by little as they go,” said Pope. One private airport in Utah has added a camera as well. The FAA has installed 11 sites in Hawaii. Ten additional sites are scheduled for fiscal year 1023, with the remaining five in FY 2024.

The program also held a [webinar](#) last December that drew about 900 attendees on Zoom and YouTube. The webinar views on YouTube have reached 5,800 as of mid-January.

“The webinar really piled a lot on, which is good,” said Pope. “With third-party hosting [like that in Maine], we have a lot more work than we have people for.” His office also is fielding frequent requests for briefings and attendance at aviation gatherings.

Among new states discussing weather cameras with the FAA are California, Idaho, Massachusetts, Minnesota and North Dakota.

Technologically, the Weather Camera Program is still researching the possibility of adding a 360-degree camera to each of its sites.

Safety is the FAA’s number one priority, and the Weather Camera Program continues to evaluate how this unique technology can further that goal.

Top image: LifeFlight of Maine weather cameras are being installed to improve weather observation by pilots.

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Justin Evans
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Very good job Cohl, your making Walter proud. The Weather Camera Program is a shining star for the FAA.

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