



PASS Members Do Their Part: Get Orlando Airport Open

In an operation most likely undertaken throughout Florida, the Texas Gulf Coast and the Caribbean over the past two weeks, Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS), AFL-FIO members in Orlando spearheaded the response efforts to get their airport, Orlando International Airport (MCO), back online after Hurricane Irma shut it down on Sunday night through Monday. These Federal Aviation Administration employees—like their counterparts at other affected airports—have been instrumental in getting aviation back up and running in the affected areas.

According to PASS Chapter FLI President Douglas Lowe, the efforts required strong teamwork among PASS members, the airlines and even the FAA's Jacksonville System Support Center (SSC). Chapter FL1 members Michael Farrell, Kyle Weeks, Charles Smith and Mervin Medina were part of the response team along with Lowe, even as they were concerned about possible damage from the hurricane to their own homes.



While Orlando did not get the worst of the storm, MCO had quite a few power outages, as well as wind and water damage—wind gusts at the airport were as high as 78 miles per hour in the early morning hours on Monday. Flooding occurred on one of the runways (pictured above); the PASS team assessed the damage on the other three on Monday and ordered the necessary parts. They took it on themselves to contact Delta Airlines for assistance and the airline delivered the parts needed directly to the closest gate. “We were able to get all the instrument landing systems at MCO 100 percent operational by Tuesday night,” said Lowe. Lowe himself drove 140 miles to the Jacksonville SSC earlier that day to retrieve additional parts and returned to help the team finish the job.

The PASS team was thankful for all the support and help they received in the aftermath of the storm. All the members in the Nav/Comm unit worked tirelessly to ensure MCO was back operational. “The Radar and Environmental Support units worked around the clock to restore their systems,” Lowe said. “The teamwork was amazing!”

PASS is grateful to all its members protecting the National Airspace System and working tirelessly



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to help get airports fully functional after these historic storms. From Texas to Georgia to Florida, from Puerto Rico and throughout the Caribbean, PASS members are there—dedicated public servants on the job to get travelers out of harm's way and recovery teams on the ground. ([See the mobile tower PASS members were able to set up in just three hours in the U.S. Virgin Islands.](#))