

Apple maps route to AK airport runway reactivated (Update)

September 27 2013, by Mark Thiessen

To the chagrin and worry of Alaska transportation officials, Apple reactivated maps app directions Friday that guide drivers to the edge of a runway instead of a terminal at the Fairbanks airport.

Apple had notified Fairbanks International Airport officials that the faulty directions had been disabled.

Officials, though, noticed the app was back to giving the misguided directions on Friday and was also providing another route that leads to the taxiway.

They don't know why the app was reactivated with more faulty directions.

Cupertino, California-based Apple didn't immediately return a message to The Associated Press on Friday evening.

One person intentionally followed the directions on Friday, which presents a dangerous situation for pilots and drivers, said Angela Spears, division operations manager for the Alaska Department of Transportation.

Alaska transportation officials sent out a warning to pilots that the faulty directions were back on.

Previous directions on newer iPhones and iPads guided drivers to the

edge of the tarmac instead of the correct route to the terminal. In incidents Sept. 6 and Sept. 20, drivers went through a gate, past warning lights and signs, and then across an active runway, to reach the terminal.

There were no injuries since both incidents happened early in the morning between flights.

The first mishap involved an out-of-state visitor trying to return a rental car before a flight, and the second was an Alaska resident, not from Fairbanks, trying to get to the airport.

The airport has since barricaded that entrance to the taxiway. A sign posted there gives a phone number for people to call to get the correct directions to the airport.

After the first incident, airport authorities immediately attempted to contact Apple. The airport is a state facility, and the Alaska attorney general's office also reached out to Apple Inc.'s legal department to get the map fixed.

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