

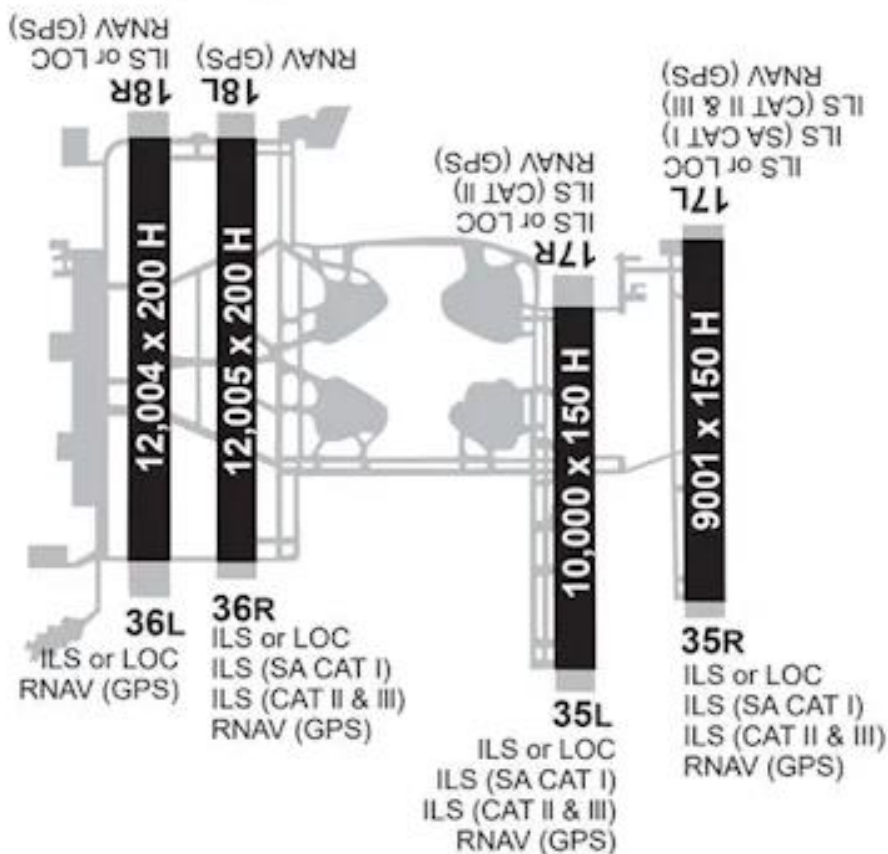
A FEW FACTS ABOUT ORLANDO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT[©]

by Dan Pemble, Kissimmee, Florida

The official designation for the Orlando International Airport is KMCO, not 'OIA', as is often erroneously stated by various Orlando-area news media outlets. The MCO designator is a carryover from the days when the airport was the site of McCord Air Force Base. The "K" is the prefix for all airports located in the United States, as assigned by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Airports in other countries have a different prefix for their 3-letter airport designators.

Following is a highly-simplified diagram of KMCO's four runways, identified as 36L, 36R, 35L and 35R when flying north towards the airport. The magnetic heading for all four of these runways is 5.6 degrees; thus, this heading is just slightly north/northeast. When approaching the airport from the south, these same runways are identified as 17L, 17R, 18L, and 18R and their magnetic heading is 185.6 degrees or a heading of slightly south/southwest. The length and width of the runways are as shown. All four runways have excellent navigation and approach aids to support airplane arrivals. These runways are certified and equipped to provide guidance for landings during various weather categories (CAT I, II, III).

Orlando (MCO)



acukwik.com

Without going into a lot of details, Category III weather conditions are those that exist when extremely low visibility conditions exist such as when dense fog or very low cloud cover exists. Most all of today's commercial transport airplanes are equipped with automatic landing systems designed specifically for use during landings in low visibility conditions, such as Category III. The actual use of the on-aircraft automatic landing capability in Category III weather requires that the airplane, the airline, and its pilots be certified for its use; the airport's landing aids must also be certified and carefully maintained for guidance in the various weather categories

With its 19.6 square-mile spread, KMCO is ranked as the 5th biggest airport in the USA. It was also rated the 8th busiest in the USA with its 57.7 million passenger count during 2023.

The position of runways 36L and 36R, relative to where I live, results in a large amount of overhead traffic on a daily basis from airplanes on their final approaches to KMCO. Based on occasional shifting winds from time to time, I can also hear and observe airplanes at full takeoff power climbing out after departing from runways 18L and 18R.

Perhaps unlike some others who don't like the noise, even after my own 40.5-year career in commercial aviation, seeing an airplane overhead is a majestic sight to me and brings music to my ears!.

