Distractions are a major factor in causing runway incursions. The use of mitigation procedures and best practices helps in eliminating distractions and avoiding non-essential communications and tasks during taxi operations.

On a summer morning, with 10 miles of visibility and a calm wind, a Beechcraft landed on Runway 2-2 and exited at Taxiway Mike. Meanwhile, a Cessna 172 was approaching Runway 2-6 Left to perform a stop-and-go.

xx681: Ground, good morning, xx681 taxi to parking.

ATC: xx681 taxi to parking via Mike Lima hold short of Runway 2-6 Left

xx681: Mike Lima hold short 2-6 Left xx681.

ATC: xx681 hold short of Runway 2-6 Left departing traffic.

xx681: xx681

ATC: xx681 possible pilot deviation.....

What can we learn from this event? Let's take a look at what happened. The controller gave instructions for the Beechcraft to taxi to parking via Taxiway Mike Lima and hold short of Runway 2-6 Left. The pilot read back the taxi clearances correctly. However, the controller later observed the Beechcraft was approaching the hold short line for Runway 2-6 Left, yet it was not slowing down. Meanwhile, the Cessna 172 was in-bound to perform a stop-and-go at Runway 2-6 Left. The controller quickly repeated the instruction for the Beechcraft to hold short of Runway 2-6 Left for departing traffic. The Cessna overflew the Beechcraft by an estimated 50 to 100 feet.

During the long taxi, the pilot was speaking with another occupant. This non-essential communication distracted the pilot from his priority task of navigating safely along the taxiway. Maintain a sterile cockpit on arrival - from the time landing preparations begin, until the aircraft is safely stopped at the terminal. A sterile cockpit must also be maintained during departure - from preflight preparations to when the aircraft has cleared the terminal area and is at cruising altitude.

Remind all cockpit occupants of the importance of maintaining a sterile cockpit. Discourage the use of cell phones during taxiing. Your first priority is always to aviate. You need to fly the airplane without losing situational awareness. Next, is navigate. Figure out where you are going before you go. And third, is communicate. This means essential communications to maintain situational awareness. In this case, the distracted pilot neglected to stop prior to the runway.

The easiest way to eliminate distractions while taxiing is to:
1) Maintain a sterile cockpit
2) Avoid non-essential tasks and communications

3) Use the current airport diagram - be aware of your taxi progress, location, and overall airport taxiing activity
4) On arrival before taxiing, identify critical locations on the taxi route where enhanced vigilance is important
5) On arrival when taxiing, avoid moving or changing items until the entire aircraft has crossed the runway hold short line
6) On departure before taxiing, complete as many checklist items as possible before beginning to taxi

Safe aircraft taxiing can be accomplished and runways incursions avoided if pilots are properly trained and correctly implement standard taxi operating procedures and practices as stated in the Advisory Circular. To view the AC, click the Resources button on the top right- hand menu bar.