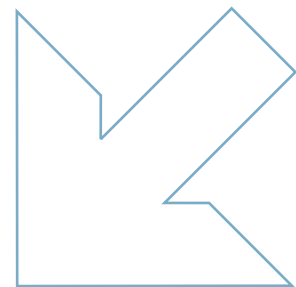




Cabin attendant falling through the avionics bay access panel in cockpit



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1 | Introduction

Airbus has received reports of cabin attendants falling through the avionics hatch door located in the cockpit, when it is open for maintenance purposes. In most of the cases the cabin attendant hurt him/herself only slightly and could continue his/her duty. But there were also some occurrences where the cabin attendant couldn't continue his/her duty. In 2001, an OIT (ref.: AI/SE 999.0002/01) was published to inform operators about such events and to provide some general recommendations. In addition, Airbus has developed a device that should contribute to prevent such mishaps.



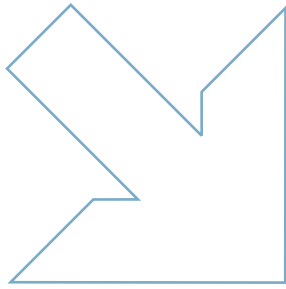
Figure 1: Open access hatch seen from cockpit door (prototype of protective arm shown)

2 | Avionics bay access hatch

The avionics compartment access hatch is located in the cockpit behind the captain's seat. It opens upwards from front to back. When the hatch is open, it rests vertically and covers approximately 80% of the corridor width. This makes the hatch position noticeable and requires care to be taken to move around it when entering the cockpit. Therefore anyone entering the cockpit while the hatch is open should notice it (see fig. 1 and 2).



Figure 2: Open access hatch seen from behind the first officer's seat



The reports received by Airbus about a cabin attendant falling into the hatch are not very detailed, but usually the cabin attendant entered the cockpit to provide some beverage to the flight crew, he/she stepped in the open hatch not realizing that there was a “hole” or fell in when stepping backwards to leave the cockpit.

Airbus decided to develop a protective device to help airlines prevent such events.

3 | Avionics bay access hatch protective arm

Mechanics need to have easy access to the avionics bay from the cockpit, sometimes with electronics equipment, thus it was necessary to develop a “protection” that doesn’t interfere with the mechanics work area. This “protection” had to be easily retrofittable, act as a visual attention getter to warn those who don’t realize the “hole” in front of them and provide enough physical resistance to somebody stepping back against it. However, its intent is not to act as a solid barrier to prevent somebody from falling.

The best compromise found by Airbus engineers is a protective arm that is attached to the hatch and unfolded when the hatch is open (see fig 3 & 4).



Figure 3: Avionics access hatch with folded protective arm



Figure 4: Avionics access hatch with unfolded protective arm

The following SBs are available to retrofit an avionics compartment access hatch with a protective arm on the different aircraft series.

A330-200/-300: SB 25-3356

A340-200/-300: SB 25-4292

A340-500/-600: SB 25-5146

The estimated installation time of the SB is 3 hours.

The same modification is available as an option for production a/c.



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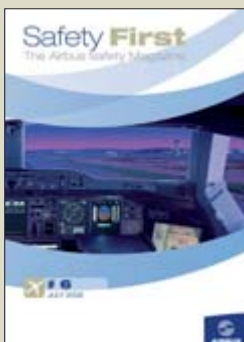
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