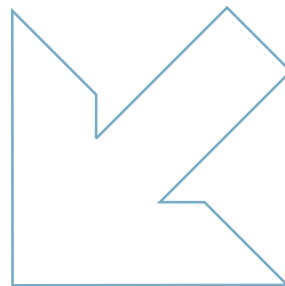




Slide/Raft Improvement



By: Fabien SAUVAGE
Emergency Equipment Engineer
Customer Services



1 | Introduction

For years Airbus has been encouraging operators to report all escape slide and slide raft deployments, whether scheduled or inadvertent, successful or unsuccessful, in order to improve their reliability.

The number of reportings, however, has steadily decreased and represents only a fraction of the estimated number of deployments. The purpose of this article is to draw attention to the need for regular and extensive feed back of slide deployment information to Airbus.

2 | Regulatory requirements

Every 36 months, operators have to perform a certain number of slide deployments, which is a function of the number of doors on the considered type of aircraft, irrespective of the fleet size.

A330/A340 fleets can be combined for common doors, therefore an operator equipped with a mix of A330/A340 will have to deploy 4 slides, as this type of aircraft is equipped with 4 doors per side (5 on the A340-600).

These deployment may be performed on either side and do not all have to be performed on the same aircraft. Inadvertant deployments may not be used to satisfy these requirements.



3 | Product improvement

Based on the above requirements, Airbus has estimated that on the A330/A340 family alone, approximately 140 deployments should have been performed in 2007. Only 14, however, have been reported to Airbus, of which 7 were successful.

Slide reliability is increasing every year because of the continuous system and component improvements and thanks to the input from our customer airlines. Exhaustive deployment reporting is key to a better overview of the slide and slide raft reliability, and allows to identify areas that could be improved. Close monitoring and reporting of in-service occurrences is essential for an efficient event analysis and associated engineering investigation/resolution launch.

4 | Recommendations

The Aircraft Maintenance Manual and SIL 25-124 specify how deployment tests should be performed. The last page of SIL 25-061 Rev 3 includes a slide/raft deployment reporting form to be forwarded to Airbus Customer Services.

5 | Conclusion

In order to be able to improve the slide/rafts reliability, and hence passenger safety, we do encourage the reporting of all deployments, whether successful or unsuccessful, scheduled or inadvertent.



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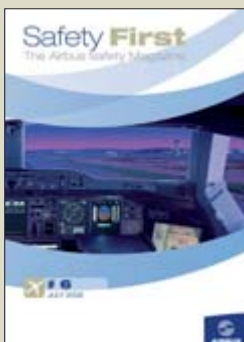
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Airbus
Product Safety department (GS)
1, rond point Maurice Bellonte
31707 Blagnac Cedex - France
Fax: +33(0)5 61 93 44 29
safetycommunication@airbus.com



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