

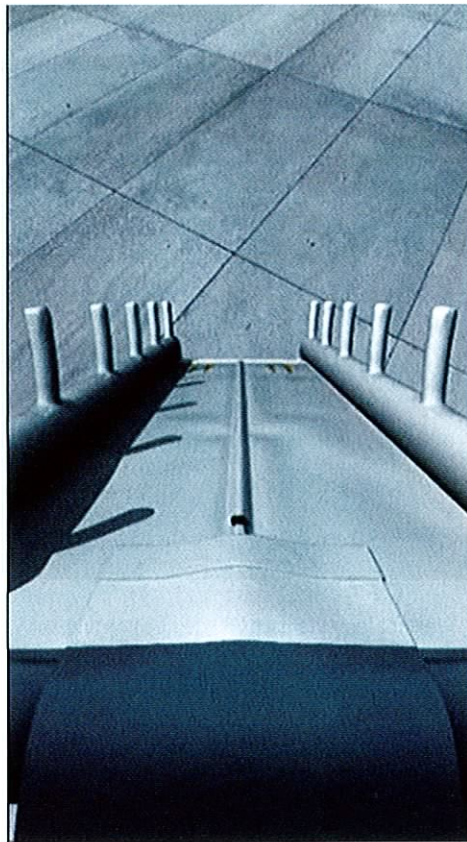
crews. They are also finding that they have the time to get their AQP programs developed."

Virtual Slides

When Lufthansa Airlines flight attendants begin their recurrent training at Lufthansa Flight Training (LFT) in Frankfurt this September, they will be the first to experience virtual emergency slide technology that is an element of the company's new Airbus A320 cabin emergency evacuation trainer (CEET). Instead of the training slides that are a component of older CEETs, students will see a computer projection of the emergency slide inflation when they open the CEET doors in the "engaged mode".

Virtual slides are being employed because to improve safety, LFT is no longer requiring flight attendants to descend down training slides during recurrent training. According to Frank Ciupka, head of LFT emergency training, this change eliminates the potential for student injuries. But more than that, the virtual slides will work to reduce the students' level of confusion sometimes experienced during cabin door trainer drills, he said.

Door trainers are suitable for training to open a door in disarmed mode, but when used to train opening a door in armed mode, students can become confused because no slide deploys, Ciupka said. The same problem occurs even with doors equipped to provide the sound of slide inflation or have a permanently



A computer image of the simulated emergency slide inflation used in the Lufthansa CEET virtual slide.
Image credit: digi mice

deployed attached slide, he added. There are also problems with door trainers with inflatable slides and slide packs, particularly when a student must determine if a slide is properly inflated.

"The virtual slide is designed to elim-

inate these problems, provide an accurate way to perform door training in the armed and disarmed modes, as well as determining when manual slide inflation is necessary," Ciupka said.

The virtual slide comprises a realistic computerized 3-D video projection onto a screen located six feet away from each CEET door, which shows the slide inflation when students properly activate the slide. An earlier version employed a computer monitor in the CEET floor, but that did not provide a realistic 3-D image. To ensure realism, LHT provided video images of actual slide deployments to the company that developed the 3-D projections.

The video provided by LFT includes those of day and night slide deployments on both ground and water, deployments with surrounding trees and other obstacles, flames and a number of other scenarios, including those of failed and collapsing slides.

"The virtual slide images are as close to reality as possible and it is important to provide training with real images to eliminate possible student confusion," Ciupka said. "Another advantage with this approach is that we can provide several different realistic scenarios. Now students will have the right image in their minds if they ever have an emergency situation aboard an airplane. By making the training as realistic as possible, the idea is that crew members will behave professionally in situations because they have already experienced them in training." **cat**




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