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Marking the next step towards ROPS capability across all Airbus families
Airbus has achieved initial EASA certification of its innovative Runway Overrun Prevention System (ROPS) technology on A320ceo* Family aircraft. This on-board cockpit technology, which Airbus has pioneered over several years and is now in service on the A380, increases pilots situational awareness during landing, reduces exposure to runway excursion risk, and if necessary, provides active protection. In March this year American Airlines selected ROPS to equip its A320 Family fleet.
This EASA certification of ROPS on the A320ceo is the next step in making ROPS available for line-fit and retrofit to other Airbus models including very soon the A320ceo with Sharklets, the A330 Family, and also the A320neo**. ROPS was first approved by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) on the A380 in October 2009 and to date is currently in service or ordered on most of the A380 fleet. ROPS is also part of the A350 XWBs basic configuration.
Already in service on the A380, ROPS is the result of years of continuing research by Airbus, said Yannick Malinge, Airbus Senior Vice President and Chief Product Safety Officer. He adds: "This initial EASA certification for ROPS on the A320 Family is an important new step to offering the enhanced safety benefits across all our aircraft and for the industry.
Runway excursion - meaning either an aircraft veering off the side of the runway, or overrunning at the very end - has become the primary cause of civil airliner hull losses in recent years, particularly as other formerly prevalent categories of aircraft accidents have now largely been eliminated. Furthermore, various industry bodies including the EASA, NTSB, Eurocontrol and FAA recognize this and are fully behind the introduction of effective measures by commercial aviation stakeholders to not only mitigate, but eliminate the risk of runway excursions.
In line with this, Airbus is working to make ROPS commercially available for aircraft from other manufacturers. The system will be coupled to the mandatory Terrain Avoidance Warning System already fitted and will utilize an enhanced and specially developed version of its worldwide runway database.
The Airbus-patented ROPS computes minimum realistic in-flight landing and on-ground stopping distances while comparing them to available landing distances in real time. The analyses take into account factors such as runway topography, runway condition, aircraft weight and configuration, wind and temperature. The resulting outcome produces audio callouts and alerts for pilots, making ROPS an awareness tool to assist the crew in the go-around decision making process and also the timely application of retardation/stopping means on touchdown.
To regularly enhance the A320 Family's capabilities and performance, Airbus invests approximately 300 million euros annually in keeping the aircraft highly competitive and efficient. More than 9,600 A320 Family aircraft have been ordered and over 5,600 delivered to operators worldwide. With a record backlog of over 4,000 aircraft, the A320 Family reaffirms its position as the world's best-selling single-aisle aircraft Family.
Airbus is the world's leading aircraft manufacturer of passenger airliners, ranging in capacity from 100 to more than 500 seats. Airbus has design and manufacturing facilities in France, Germany, the UK, and Spain, and subsidiaries in the US, China, Japan and in the Middle East. In addition, it provides an international network of customer support and training centres.
EADS Space Transportation
Hünefeldstr. 1-5
28199 Bremen
Telefon: +(49) 4 21/5 39-51 07
Telefax: +(49) 4 21/5 39-34 31
URL: <http://www.eads.net/>

Pressekontakt

EADS Space Transportation

28199 Bremen

eads.net/

Firmenkontakt

EADS Space Transportation

28199 Bremen

eads.net/

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