

BACK TO BASICS

AIRBUS EGRESS SLIDE REMOVAL FOR ARFF



by
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COMMENTS ON AN ACTUAL ALERT

On August 5, 2008 an American Airlines B757-300 returned to LAX after takeoff to Hawaii for a reported “smoke in the cabin” emergency. The aircraft returned to LAX and landed safely on runway 7L, rolled to a stop on the runway where passengers began evacuating the aircraft. At the same time this Alert 2 occurred, the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) ARFF crews were out on the ramp standing by for new Airbus A380 operations to begin at LAX. They were quickly on scene when the B757 aircraft emergency evacuation slides were fully deployed. As I watched the news event unfold on the television I was curious to see how the LAFD would utilize their Interior Access Vehicle (IAV). All of the main door (Type 1) slides had been deployed at R1, R2, R4, L1, L2 and L4 for passenger evacuation. Over wing hatches were not opened for evacuation thus R3 and L3 emergency evacuation slides on both sides

were not activated. Passengers evacuated the aircraft while ARFF crews assisted at the base of the evacuation slides. No smoke was showing. What was very interesting to me was the immediate use of the IAV to provide access to the interior. The LAFD ARFF IAV approached the aircraft on the port side and docked the IAV on the leading edge of the wing approximately halfway between the fuselage and wing tip. Firefighters then quickly ascended the IAV stairs to the platform. The LAFD ARFF were then in good position to quickly access the interior of the aircraft through the over wing (Type IV) hatch(s) on the port side if necessary. All passengers/crew evacuated safely with no apparent injuries. The cause for the “smoke in the cabin” alert that caused this aircraft evacuation was probably due to smoke entering the cabin through contaminated bleed air entering the cabin ventilation system. The new Boeing 787 does not use engine bleed air for passenger cabin ventilation.

AIRCRAFT SLIDE TYPES

Aircraft emergency inflatable slide type performance standards on commercial passenger aircraft must comply with the FAA Technical Standard Order (TSO) C69c. You can download the FAA TSO C69c .pdf file here

http://rgl.faa.gov/Regulatory_and_Guidance_Library%5Crgtso.nsf/0/CF67750E10C416C286256D-C1005384A0?OpenDocument

There are four different inflatable slide types identified in the FAA TSO:

Type I - Inflatable slide suitable for assisting occupants in descending from a floor-level aircraft exit or from an aircraft wing.

Type II - Inflatable slide also designed to be used as a life raft, i.e. a slide/raft

Type III - Inflatable exit ramp suitable for assisting occupants in descending to an aircraft wing from certain overwing exits.

Type IV - Combination inflatable exit ramp and wing-to-ground slide.

AIRCRAFT EMERGENCY EVACUATION SLIDE INFORMATION

Part of FAA Part 139 ARFF aircraft familiarization training should include understanding how emergency aircraft evacuation slides are deployed on the commercial passenger aircraft using your airport and how airport firefighters will deflate/detach these slides for ingress to the in-