


SAFETY INFORMATION AND ADVISORY NOTICE (SIAN)		 Transport Malta Civil Aviation Directorate Safety and Compliance Unit Transport Malta Centre Triq Pantar Lija LJA 2021 Malta aviationsafety.tm@transport.gov.mt
SIAN Number: 01/26	Issue Date: 16/06/2026	
Subject: Safety Awareness of Overwing Emergency Exit Hatches During Aircraft Maintenance		

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This safety notice is issued to increase awareness among all personnel operating in and around aircraft during maintenance activities, particularly in the vicinity of overwing emergency exit hatches where there is a risk of inadvertent slide deployment. It follows an event reported through the Occurrence Reporting system, which highlighted the hazards associated with unintended activation of escape slides when appropriate precautions are not observed.
- 1.2 The purpose of this notice is to reinforce safe working practices, prevent recurrence, and ensure that all staff remain vigilant when working near or handling emergency exits during maintenance operations.
- 1.3 The root cause of the occurrence was determined to be the unintentional activation of the overwing emergency exit escape slide due to accidental contact with the exit button while personnel were performing normal work activities near the door. There was no evidence of intentional activation, misuse, or unsafe behaviour by personnel.

2.0 APPLICABILITY

- 2.1 This Notice is to be disseminated to all personnel, and people who have interests relating to the safe operation of aircraft emergency doors and equipment.

Aerodromes:	Not primarily affected.
Air Traffic:	Not primarily affected.
Airspace:	Not primarily affected.
Airworthiness:	CAMO and Part-145 organisations
Flight Operations:	Not primarily affected.
Licenced/Unlicenced Personnel:	All Maintenance Staff, Aircraft Painters and Personnel working in the vicinity of the emergency exits

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

- 3.1 Overwing emergency exit hatches can be particularly susceptible to inadvertent activation if the system is not deactivated. Emergency exit hatches can be operated from the outside, and if the latch mechanism is in the armed position, this may result in unintended escape slide deployment.
- 3.2 Type III emergency exits are operated from inside the cabin by removing a protective cover and pulling the release handle. These exits can also be accessed externally from the wing surface, where activation is achieved by pressing a red push panel. The simplicity of this design means that even personnel without specific training can unintentionally open the exit when force is applied to the panel.



Figure 1 - Type III Overwing hatches (Airbus A320 aircraft)

- 3.3 When the system is in the armed configuration, opening the exit, either from within the cabin or externally, will result in the automatic deployment of the escape slide. This condition poses a significant hazard to personnel working on or around the wing area and near the exit.
- 3.4 This event highlights how normal maintenance activities, when conducted near emergency exits, can lead to unintended consequences despite no unsafe behaviour or negligence. It also underlines the importance of coordination between multiple organisations working on the same aircraft.
- 3.5 Strict adherence to door safety procedures and increased awareness are essential to prevent inadvertent escape slide deployment and ensure a safe working environment.
- 3.6 To mitigate the risk of recurrence, the following actions are recommended:
 - Introduce a formal door safety control procedure during painting and similar maintenance activities.
 - Ensure escape slides systems on all doors are disengaged/deactivated prior to work.

- Implement pre-work and post-work door status verification.
- Establish formal coordination between all stakeholders involved, particularly where:
 - A Part-145 maintenance organisation is responsible for the aircraft, and
 - Third-party contractors (e.g. painting teams) are performing work.
 - This coordination should include clear responsibilities, communication of door status, and formal handover/takeover procedures to ensure all parties are aware of the configuration and associated risks.
- Include this occurrence as a case study in SMS and Human Factors (HF) recurrent training for relevant personnel.
- Reinforce awareness of the risks associated with working near emergency exits, particularly when slides are armed

4.0 FURTHER INFORMATION

- 4.1 Airbus Safety First - Preventing Inadvertent Slide Deployments:
<https://safetyfirst.airbus.com/preventing-inadvertent-slide-deployments/>

5.0 CANCELLATION

- 5.1 This SIAN will remain in force until further notice.

Safety and Compliance Unit