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All SAS aircraft being equipped with ground-warning system

Aircraft in the SAS fleet are currently being equipped with an extra safety system, EGPWS (Electronic Ground Proximity Warning System). Within the course of a few years, all SAS aircraft will feature the system, which will further enhance flight safety.

EGPWS keeps the pilot informed of ground conditions ahead of the aircraft and issues warnings to the pilot to ensure that the aircraft does not come too close to the ground during a flight.

Parts of the SAS fleet are already equipped with EGPWS, while an increasing number of aircraft are currently being fitted with the system. Today, all Boeing 737s are delivered with the system as a fixture. The system will also be a feature of all the new Airbus aircraft that will be delivered to SAS during 2001 and it will be fitted in all Boeing 767s during 2001/2002. All Dash Q-400 will also be equipped with the system.

SAS was the world's first airline to install the system in all of its MD80 models, for which certification was received in January 2000. By the end of the first half of 2001, all MD80/90 models will have been equipped with EGPWS, a safety-enhancing investment that will cost SEK 30 million.

"SAS has always assigned the utmost priority to safety. The decision to equip our aircraft with EGPWS is another measure designed to increase passenger safety," explains Staffan Collin, Head of Flight Operations at SAS. "Many of our flights involve journeys through regions where topography and weather conditions entail special challenges, such as Norway and northern Sweden."

This is how EGPWS works

The aircraft's position is sent to the EGPWS computer from the aircraft's GPS navigation system. The aircraft's altitude is plotted by the aircraft's CADC (Central Air Data Computer), which receives signals from the altimeter.

By combining the positioning features of the GPS system with the altitude position from the altimeter and facts about ground conditions, received from the ground-data base, the pilot is constantly informed of ground conditions beneath and ahead of the aircraft and is warned of any ground conditions that could entail risks for the continued flight.

"EGPWS increases the information sent to the pilot and thus reduces the risk of an accident that results from the pilot maneuvering the aircraft too close to the ground," adds Staffan Collin.

The system comprises:

- a EGPWS computer and a digital database on ground conditions
- a GPS (Global Positioning System) and a synthetic ground display that is an integrated feature of the pilot's navigation display panel.

Illustration: <http://www.scandinavian.net/company/newsfacts/press/latest.asp>

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