

SHOW time!

Preparing Boeing aircraft for the Paris Air Show is like making a movie—with a cast of many

By Terri Christofferson and photos by Jim Anderson



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— Jasper Corleis, a lead Flight Test Operations engineer and test director



PHOTOS: (Left) Jasper Corleis, left, and Willie Matthewson are part of the team that creates and executes plans to get Boeing products to key public gatherings such as this month's Paris Air Show. (Above) Rodney Tong, from left, Mike Rosenzweig, Becki Neel, Janice Denard and Charles Hartshorne inspect safety gear that's put on aircraft appearing at air shows.

Like pilots who fly the aircraft, this Boeing team has its own “checklist” that must be completed in order to make the show.

As in the Paris Air Show, granddaddy of all the international air shows, which takes place this month in France.

Long before air-show visitors have the opportunity to get up close to the aircraft, a team of Boeing Test & Evaluation employees has crafted detailed plans to get Boeing products to the show—and get them on display safely. It is part of the broad range of duties the test organization handles to provide high-quality services that support the company's many business programs.

The test director has a master plan for the entire trip, similar to a script for

a movie.

Jasper Corleis, a lead Flight Test Operations engineer and test director, described the effort as a well-orchestrated event that involves dozens of people behind the scenes.

Boeing is working to bring several products for static display during this year's air show.

From fuel loading to the route taken, from weather checks to security on the ground, Flight Test Operations is responsible for coordinating all the necessary pieces.

“We are only a part of a larger team that works together to make things happen—and sometimes our contribution seems small, compared with the total effort required,” Corleis said. “We have

the airport technology experts who tell us the surface strength of runways, weight and balance experts who tell us how much the airplane weighs, and countless others who make this possible.”

Prior to departure, Flight Test Operations will conduct a readiness review, which includes the pilots as well as representatives from Dispatch, Weights & Balance, Test Integration, Ground Operations, Quality, Manufacturing, International Security Activity, Global Trade Control, Test Program Management, and Instrumentation.

The safety of the people and the airplane come first; mission objectives, second.

Safety preparations for the show include checking that the site has adequate facilities and required tools, and ensuring that security personnel, both local and

from Boeing, are in place. Coordination also is needed with catering and scheduling to make sure the flight team is fed and well-rested before and during the flight.

The planning heavily involves Ground Operations, which has two main responsibilities: managing test airplane configuration and serving as onboard cabin safety representatives during testing and general operations. A two-day class is mandatory for Ground Operations and focuses on aviation safety, from treating minor injuries to evacuation exercises.

During the training, the team responds to simulated emergencies—fire, power outages and injuries.

In a swimming pool, fully clothed participants learn techniques for floating, keeping warm in a group and supporting

someone who is injured. From a 737 cabin simulator, they practice using emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers, smoke hoods and fire axes. Flight physiology—how the body acts and reacts at altitude—is included.

At the air show, while Marketing will decide what areas of the airplane should be on display or accessible, it is up to Ground Operations to make necessary arrangements to protect people, the airplane and the environment around the airplane.

Ground Operations determines areas of the airplane that are safe for general access, taking into consideration hot or cold surfaces, test installations, and more. The team makes sure everyone is safe moving around the cabin, especially when casual observers are present.

Hatches, which allow access to the lower part of the airplane, are secured during static display and sharp edges are shielded to prevent injuries.

Willie Matthewson, a lead Ground Operations engineer, is a cabin safety expert for Experimental Flight Test programs.

“In a public venue,” he said, “the airplane can be touched, toured or have restricted access. We've got to be ready for all the options.” ■

terri.l.christofferson@boeing.com