

Airbus Warns: Sun Radiation Disrupts Flight Control Data

Description

Airbus, the prominent aircraft manufacturer, has mandated the grounding of thousands of its planes following the identification of a critical issue concerning solar radiation that may disrupt onboard flight control computers. This has resulted in widespread delays across the aviation sector.

An estimated 6,000 A320 aircraft are believed to be impacted, which constitutes approximately half of Airbus's global fleet. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that the majority can resume service following a straightforward software update. The UK's aviation authority has indicated that implementing these updates may lead to "some disruption and cancellations to flights."

The situation unfolded following an investigation into an alarming incident involving an A320 aircraft traveling between the United States and Mexico, which experienced a sudden altitude drop last October. This flight, operated by JetBlue Airways, was forced to make an emergency landing in Florida, resulting in injuries to at least 15 passengers.

In addition to the A320, the issue also encompasses the A318, A319, and A321 models. For around 5,100 of the affected Airbus planes, the problem can be rectified through a relatively unobtrusive software update, which typically requires about three hours to complete. However, the remaining 900 older models will necessitate a physical replacement of onboard computers, thus prohibiting them from carrying passengers until the replacements are finalized. The timeline for this repair will depend on the availability of the requisite components.

Airbus has expressed recognition of the potential "operational disruption for passengers and customers," offering an apology for the inconvenience. Aviation analyst Sally Gethin remarked to BBC News that this development is "highly unusual." The impact on passengers will likely vary depending on the differing strategies airlines adopt to enact the necessary upgrades.

While disruptions have been limited in the UK, with Gatwick Airport reporting minor issues, major airlines like British Airways have been less affected, whereas others, including EasyJet, have initiated software upgrades with minimal service interruptions expected.



Vocabulary List:

- 1. **Grounding** /'graʊndɪŋ/ (noun): The act of preventing an aircraft from flying.
- 2. **Disruption** /dis'rʌpʃən/ (noun): Interference with the normal operation or progress of something.
- 3. **Software** /'sɔ:f(t)wεə/ (noun): The programs and other operating information used by a computer.
- 4. Rectified /'rɛktɪfaɪd/ (verb): Corrected or set right.
- 5. Incident /'Insident/ (noun): An event or occurrence especially one of minor importance.
- 6. Component /kəmˈpoʊ.nənt/ (noun): A part or element of a larger whole.

Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. How many A320 aircraft are estimated to be impacted by the grounding mandate? ESL-NEWS

Option: 2,000 Option: 6,000 Option: 10,000 Option: 15,000

2. What is the recommended solution for the majority of affected Airbus planes?

Option: Physical replacement Option: Software update Option: Component overhaul Option: Aircraft redesign

3. How many models, in addition to the A320, are impacted by the critical issue?

Option: 1 Option: 2 Option: 3 Option: 4

4. What is the primary concern related to the critical issue with Airbus planes?

Option: Engine malfunction

Option: Solar radiation interference

Option: Pilot error



Option: Fuel leakage

5. How many older Airbus models require a physical replacement of onboard computers?

Option: 100 Option: 500 Option: 900 Option: 1,200

6. What is the potential outcome of airlines adopting different strategies for enacting necessary upgrades?

Option: Increased disruptions

Option: Minimal service interruptions

Option: Total grounding Option: Financial losses

True-False

- 7. The critical issue affecting Airbus planes involves onboard flight control computers being disrupted by solar radiation.
- 8. The situation with Airbus planes has led to disruptions predominantly in the UK.
- 9. The majority of affected Airbus planes can resume service after a physical replacement of onboard computers.
- 10. EasyJet has experienced significant service interruptions due to the Airbus grounding mandate.
- 11. Airbus has acknowledged the inconvenience caused to passengers and customers due to the grounding mandate.
- 12. The availability of components will determine the timeframe for repairing the older Airbus models.

Gap-Fill

13. The estimated numbe	er of A320 aircraft imp	pacted by the critical is	ssue is approximately



14. For around 5,100 affected Airbus planes, the probl	lem can be rectified through a relative	ly unobtrusive
update.		
16. Gatwick Airport reported	issues related to the Airbus grounding	g mandate.
17. A physical replacement of onboard computers is n	ecessary for	of the older
Airbus models.		
18. The timeline for repairing the older models will de	pend on the availability of the requisite	е
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Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. 6,000 2. Software update 3. 3 4. Solar radiation interference 5. 900 6. Minimal service

interruptions

True-False: 7. True 8. False 9. False 10. False 11. True 12. True **Gap-Fill:** 13. 6,000 14. software 16. minor 17. 900 18. components

CATEGORY

1. Business - LEVEL5

Date Created 2025/12/01 **Author** aimeeyoung99