

Evacuation from the Upper Deck: Merely an Exit Problem?

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Evacuation from a VLTA is attracting increasing attention in the media and on conferences. One issue is whether we must necessarily put up with higher egress times and higher numbers of injuries during evacuations from the upper deck compared to evacuations from a conventional main deck. The paper analyzes factors that possibly account for differences in the evacuation process between upper and main deck. At a first glance, there might be an exit problem, as, for instance, passengers may be afraid of the height and hesitate to jump. At a second glance, however, there might also be a cabin problem, if, for example, passengers feel unprepared for the unfamiliar jump and hesitate to be the first to jump. At a third glance, we might also be confronted with a ground problem, for instance, if more passengers are injured and remain seated at the bottom of the slide, making those passengers standing in the exit hesitate to jump. Research is needed in order to insure that evacuations from the upper deck can be managed as safely as they are today from the main deck of conventional aircraft.