



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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SFO and United Airlines Successfully Test New Landing System

SAN FRANCISCO -- United Airlines has successfully tested San Francisco International Airport's newest technological advance - the Simultaneous Offset Instrument Approach/Precision Runway Monitoring System (SOIA/PRM), which - when fully implemented - will allow the Airport to increase aircraft arrival rate in inclement weather.

The test took place in the early morning hours of Dec. 4, 2003, using a UAL Airbus A-320. On board were representatives of SFO, the Airport/Community Roundtable, and the FAA's Northern California Terminal Radar Approach Control Center (NorCal TRACON).

During good weather, SFO can accept between 60 and 65 aircraft per hour, using both parallel runways. With overcast skies, however, only one of the runways can be used because the parallel runways are separated by only 750 feet centerline to centerline instead of 4,300 feet, which is required for side-by-side approach under instrument meteorological conditions (IMC). As a result, arrival rates drop to 30 aircraft per hour. This can cause major disruptions to flight schedules, affecting passengers in the San Francisco region, throughout the United States, and overseas.

The SOIA approach allows a standard instrument approach to Runway 28L and now establishes a three degree offset instrument approach to Runway 28R. At approximately four miles out from the end of the runway, the aircraft gently turns directly to Runway 28R for a visual approach below the cloud layer to SFO. The Airport has installed a state-of-the-art ground-based high scan rate radar system, the Precision Runway Monitor (PRM), to ensure proper aircraft separation at all times.

It is estimated that the SOIA/PRM system will increase arrival rates under instrument conditions from thirty per hour to as many as thirty-eight an hour.

"San Francisco International Airport is very excited to be a part of this technological advancement that will improve our on-time performance," said John L. Martin, Airport Director. "The Airport has invested more than five years and \$20 million to purchase and install the SOIA/PRM and it is very rewarding to see it nearing operation," he added.

The SOIA/PRM system has been an on-going Airport project in development with United Airlines, the FAA, the Airline Pilots Association, and National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA).

Once final operational and communications details are worked out between the FAA and NATCA, the system should be fully operational for use by all airlines as early Spring 2004.

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