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As part of an ongoing effort to improve aviation safety worldwide, The Boeing Company has released to its commercial airplane customers its latest training aid package, this one designed to reduce incidents of "controlled flight into terrain," commonly called CFIT, which is the leading cause of airplane accidents involving loss of life.

Boeing recently began shipping the CFIT Education and Training Aid to all of its operators who fly models ranging from the 707 to the 777. The Boeing-produced package was developed over a three-year period by an industry-wide team representing airframe manufacturers, avionics suppliers, airlines, pilot groups, and governmental and regulatory agencies.

Since the beginning of commercial jet operations, more than 9,000 deaths have resulted because of airplanes inadvertently flying into terrain, water or an obstacle. "The goal of the training aid is to prevent such accidents by improving the knowledge and the decision making of flight crews and others in the aviation industry," said Capt. David Carbaugh, chief pilot - Flight Safety, Boeing Commercial Airplane Group.

The two-volume aid is a comprehensive training package of written and audio-visual materials that airlines can provide to their flight crews, using a combination of classroom and simulator training. Carbaugh said airlines may choose to adopt the aid as the foundation of their own CFIT training program, or they may extract portions of the material to enhance existing training programs.

Like past training package developments led by Boeing, distribution of this latest aid is expected to make a significant contribution to improving aviation safety, Carbaugh said. "In areas of the world where CFIT training has been deployed," he explained, "the CFIT accident rate has already been dramatically reduced."

The Flight Safety Foundation is distributing the CFIT training aid to many non-Boeing operators. Airbus and McDonnell Douglas are distributing the training aid to operators who fly their airplanes exclusively.

Other aviation training aids in the series developed by Boeing over the last 10 years include Wake Turbulence Avoidance, Rejected Takeoff, Windshear, Volcanic Ash Avoidance and Tail Strike. The next major industry safety training aid, expected to be released in late 1997, will focus on helping flight crews recover from unusual flight attitudes that can result from numerous causes, or so-called "upset" conditions.

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