

Boeing to Supply Environmentally Safe Paint Removal System to U.S. Navy

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The Boeing Company has received a contract from the U.S. Navy for its FLASHJET® Coatings Removal System, a production version of its effective, economical and environmentally safe paint stripping system.

The FLASHJET® system, which is capable of stripping coatings from various fighter-sized aircraft, will be used to strip T-45A Goshawk trainers based in Kingsville, Texas. The system has the flexibility to strip paint from virtually any aircraft or component that fits inside its robotic gantry system.

"The FLASHJET® system offers the U.S. Navy a variety of advantages, including lower costs for removing coatings from both metal and composite surfaces," said Jim Restelli, Boeing vice president and general manager of Aerospace Support for McDonnell Aircraft and Missile Systems. "FLASHJET® also meets current and expected environmental compliance regulations, all while offering better worker safety and health protection," he said.

The U.S. Navy awarded the contract for the FLASHJET® system for use on T-45A training aircraft following a competitive procurement for a commercially available coatings removal system. The T-45A FLASHJET® system will be operational by mid-1998.

FLASHJET® is a patented process that combines pulsed light energy and a steady stream of dry ice pellets to remove up to four square feet of paint per minute for less than \$4 a square foot. The cost is less than one-third the cost of manual removal, and one-sixth the cost of chemical stripping. The FLASHJET® system produces 99 percent less waste than either the manual or chemical stripping process. The waste that is produced is immediately vacuumed into a filter capture system, eliminating surface cleanup time.

The FLASHJET® process has been tested and verified to be safe for all types of metallic and composite materials, including fiberglass, kevlar and boron/graphite epoxy based components.

Recently, the U.S. Navy formally approved the use of FLASHJET® on metallic fixed-wing aircraft, and is expected to approve its use on composite fixed-wing aircraft surfaces by the end of 1997. The Boeing Company also is under contract to provide a FLASHJET® system that will be integrated into a prototype mobile system designed to strip P-3C Orion anti-submarine patrol aircraft based in Jacksonville, Fla. That system will be in place next year.

Boeing currently operates a similar FLASHJET® system at its helicopter facility in Mesa, Ariz. This system has been operating since May 1996, and is currently used to strip paint from U.S. Army AH-64A Apache helicopters that are being remanufactured into AH-64D Apache Longbows.

The Boeing Company announced earlier in the year that it was awarded a contract from Singapore Technologies Aerospace-Engineering (STAE) for a mobile FLASHJET® system capable of stripping coatings from transport aircraft as large as a Boeing 747-400. STAE will use the mobile FLASHJET® system to strip Singapore Air Force and U.S. Marine Corps C-130s, as well as other aircraft.

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