

Environmentally Safe Boeing Flashjet® Coatings Removal Systems Enters Operation for U.S. Navy

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The U.S. Navy has put into operation its first production Boeing FLASHJET® Coatings Removal System at Naval Air Station Kingsville. The event was marked at a ribbon cutting ceremony here today.

The effective, economical and environmentally safe paint stripping system will be used by the Navy to strip Boeing T-45A Goshawk training aircraft. The Navy has modified one of its six bays in the Corrosion Control facility at Kingsville to house the robotic gantry FLASHJET system, which could also be used to strip other Navy carrier-based tactical aircraft.

"The beginning of FLASHJET operations at Kingsville is the result of a long and supportive relationship between the Navy and Boeing," said Glenn Hess, general manager of Aerospace Logistics Services for Boeing. "We have been working together since 1992 to evaluate, test, qualify and implement the FLASHJET technology on a wide range of aircraft metallic and composite material structures. I'm confident this new system will enhance the operations at this important naval aviation training base by providing greatly reduced operating costs and cycle times."

Installation of the FLASHJET system at Kingsville follows a successful demonstration program recently conducted at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Fla., where FLASHJET was used to strip Navy P-3 Orion maritime patrol aircraft.

The FLASHJET system incorporates 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. That cost is less than one-third the cost of manual removal, and one-sixth the cost of chemical stripping. As opposed to chemical stripping and media blast processes, the environmentally safe FLASHJET process produces more than 90 percent less waste. The small amount of waste that is produced is immediately vacuumed into a filter capture system, eliminating surface cleanup time.

With the FLASHJET process, there is no pre-clean or masking required prior to stripping. Once the coating has been removed, the cleaned surface is ready to paint with no further preparation.

The FLASHJET process has been tested and verified to be safe for all types of metallic and composite substrates, including fiberglass, kevlar and boron/graphite epoxy-based components. It can be used for high-rate stripping of aircraft components, tactical aircraft and transport aircraft.

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