

Boeing Begins Flight Testing F-22 Block 3S Avionics

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Boeing has begun flight testing an updated F-22 avionics software package, Block 3S, on its 757 Flying Test Bed, keeping the program on track for a November delivery.

Block 3S is an early version of Block 3.0 software, which the Defense Acquisition Board requires must fly on an F-22 before the end of the year for the program to receive production funds.

"This is an important milestone for the program and allows us to remain on schedule to deliver Block 3.0 software to F-22 team partner Lockheed Martin in early November," said Mike Harris, Boeing F-22 Avionics manager. "By testing Block 3S on the FTB before we test Block 3.0, we will significantly reduce technical risks prior to delivery."

Testing Block 3S on the FTB will enable the program to evaluate radar, electronic warfare, and communication, navigation and identification sensors in an airborne environment for the first time. During four months of testing, engineers will verify that sensors and associated antennas are working together as expected.

Block 3.0 software, currently being tested in the Boeing Avionics Integration Lab, will be tested aboard the FTB in August. Block 3.0, which has increased sensor-fusion capability, also adds weapons-delivery capability to the F-22's integrated avionics.

The FTB, a modified Boeing 757, is reducing avionics development costs, risks and future F-22 flight test hours by enabling extensive in-flight testing, evaluation and troubleshooting before full avionics are installed and flown on the Raptor.

To date, F-22 avionics software has undergone more than 15,000 hours of rigorous testing in the lab and more than 400 hours on the FTB.

Boeing is teamed with Lockheed Martin and Pratt & Whitney to design and build the F-22 Raptor for the U.S. Air Force. Boeing supplies the F-22's wings, aft fuselage, radar, mission software, avionics integration and testing, as well as training and life-support systems.

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