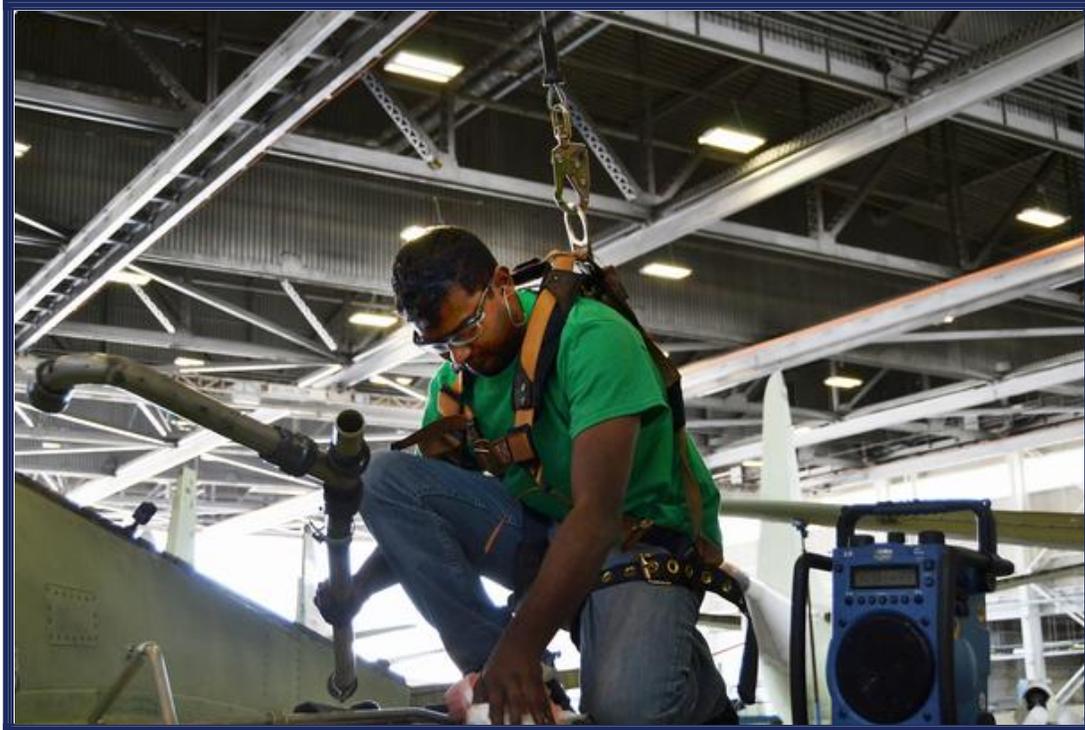




New fall protection on the rise at FRCSE



Fleet Readiness Center Southeast sheet metal mechanic Sam Arulraj works on a P-3C Orion wing while hooked to a new fall protection device. (U.S. Navy Photo/Released)

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Fleet Readiness Center Southeast (FRCSE) artisans on the P-3 line now have protection from above.

Though they're made of metal, the P-3 line's new fall protection devices could prove to be a Godsend if anyone ever falls. In addition to the B-4 stands that provide a walking platform around the massive, four-engine patrol planes, FRCSE engineers and safety personnel purchased 18 Tuff Built "cubes" with telescoping arms that can reach up to 41 feet. The arms, like a crane's arm, reach yards above the artisans and attach to their harnesses via a cable. If someone slips, the cable locks like a seatbelt.

"These provide more safety while the artisans are working on the aircraft more than four feet off the ground," said FRCSE process engineer Marc Saint-Fleur. "So if they fall off the aircraft, there's something that can catch them before they land and are possibly injured."

On Aug. 4, sheet metal mechanic Sam Arulraj was attached to one of the devices while he walked about, working on a P-3 wing. FRCSE program management specialist Joe Lubarsky looked on from below.



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“These flow with the artisans a lot better,” Lubarsky said. “Some of them have used systems similar to this that either put a constant tug of tension on them, or lock up too easily. They seem to think this system is much easier to use.

“Now our artisans can hook up their harnesses, go up in the lift and walk directly out on the wing and start working.”

Not only are the units safer, they’ll also clear-up room in the hangar.

“It will increase hangar bay floor space, because we can remove most of the B4 stands,” Saint-Fleur said. “We’re not going to get rid of all of them, but the ones we do keep won’t be considered fall protection.

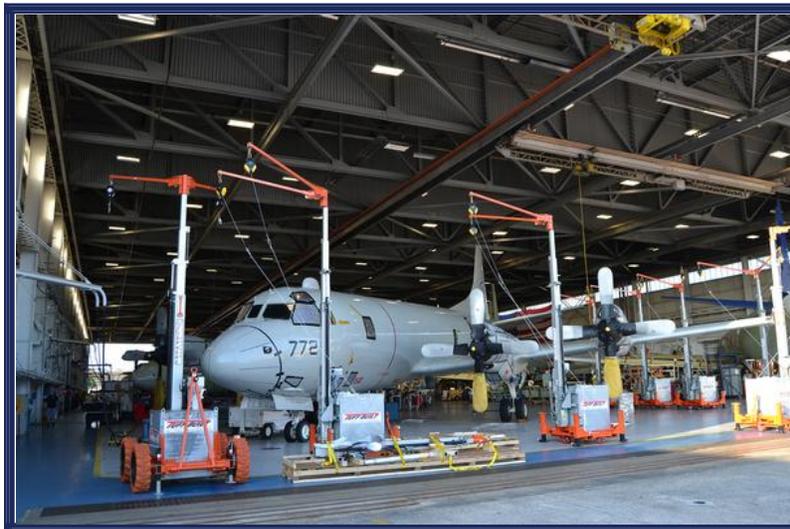
“They’ll be stands to help the guys put up props or equipment onto the aircraft.”

The journey from idea to reality for the new equipment began two years ago.

“Our safety office determined there was a big need for fall protection, especially on the P-3 line,” said FRCSE safety and occupational health specialist Don Waters.

After months of testing, acquisition and certification, the cubes are now in-use.

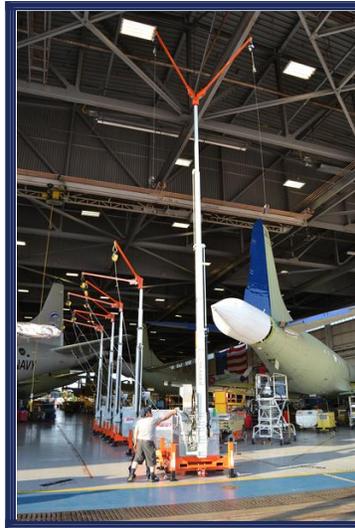
“Nothing is perfect, but these are the closest things to it,” Waters said.



New mobile fall arrest systems are staged inside the P-3 hangar at Fleet Readiness Center Southeast. The units use a cable and harness system to allow artisans to work safely while high above the hangar's floor. In addition, the new system will make for a more spacious work environment with the removal of older, platform-fall protection equipment. (U.S. Navy Photo/Released)



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Workers raise one of Fleet Readiness Center Southeast's new mobile fall arrest systems at the facility's P-3 hangar. The systems can reach a maximum height of 41 feet and allow artisans to work safely while high above the hangar's deck. They will also clear space by eliminating the need for older, platform-style units. (U.S. Navy Photo/Released)