

Lifeline rescue plan

by Staff Sgt.
Marianne E. Lane
97th Air Mobility Wing
Public Affairs

ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. -- Mr. Smith feels dizzy, light headed, all the blood is draining from his face, he starts to sweat, and then everything goes black. Everyone is shouting, but he hears nothing because he has passed out and fallen from the top of an aircraft. He is dangling by a harness that is cutting off circulation by way of his femoral artery- he has six minutes before serious damage starts to occur in the lower extremities.

The fire department is called, arrives and they begin the process of an emergency rescue. One firefighter is lifted up to Smith in a lift, unhooks him

and brings him into the bucket to be lowered to the ground. Smith is placed on a backboard with a cervical collar, strapped down and taken to the nearest medical treatment facility to make a full recovery.

This scenario too many Airmen who wear safety harnesses for their jobs, this emergency rescue situation is a real threat. Thanks to the innovative new fall protection and rescue plan for their jobs, the threat of injury is not as high as it could be.

According to Air Force Occupational Safety and Health Standard 91-100 "any fall protection system must include a rescue plan. A rescue plan will be developed by the unit whenever fall protection measures are employed. All workers shall be fully trained in, and will have practiced the res-

cue plan."

Having fall protection rescue system training is a new requirement outlined in AFOSHSTD91-100. In situations where an individual can fall four or more feet, either a passive or active fall protection system will be used. Passive fall protection systems consist of guardrails, work stands, platforms and nets. Active fall protection systems consists of personal fall arrest systems (PFASs) which requires a body harness be attached to an anchorage or lifeline. PFAS absorb the energy forces during a fall, reducing the potential for injury, but there is only six minutes to rescue the individual before serious damage occurs in the lower extremities. The passive fall system is the recommended method.

According to Maria

Johnson, 97th Maintenance Directorate safety voluntary protection program coordinator, fall protection has always been a safety priority for the A-Team.

The requirement for fall protection was previously 10 feet, but it is now four feet. This requirement was changed by the Air Force earlier this year to reduce the number of injuries. During the past couple years, the A-Team, has implemented new fall protection measures such as a dual-overhead cable system for the KC-135 Stratotanker inspection bay. This system allows four workers to safely walk on top of the aircraft while attached to the harness system. The A-Team is also trying to get a dual-overhead cable for C-17 maintenance crews. Plans for a safety harness for the C-17 Globemaster III maintenance bay are in the works.

Altus AFB is the first to conduct training on this safety requirement.



ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. -- Firefighters from the 97th Civil Engineer Squadron prepare a back board during a fall protection rescue plan training Aug. 9, 2011 in the KC-135 inspection bay. The 97th Maintenance Directorate trained personnel how to properly remove unconscious individuals from safety harnesses and rescue individuals who fall while performing maintenance on top of aircraft. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Marianne E. Lane/ 97th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs-Released)



ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. -- Firefighters from the 97th Civil Engineer Squadron prepare their gear to simulate a rescue as part of fall protection rescue training in the KC-135 inspection bay Aug. 9, 2011. The 97th Maintenance Directorate trained personnel how to properly remove unconscious individuals from safety harnesses and rescue individuals who fall while performing maintenance on top of aircraft. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Marianne E. Lane/ 97th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs-Released)

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