



U.S. Customs and Border Protection

OAM P-3 Service Life Extension Program

FACT SHEET

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Office of Air and Marine (OAM) operates 14 Lockheed Orion P-3 patrol aircraft. OAM P-3s are high-endurance, all-weather, tactical turbo-prop aircraft, which are utilized primarily for long-range patrols along the U.S. border and in the drug Transit Zones. CBP P-3 aircraft provide the bulk of their time conducting long-range surveillance, information gathering, and interdiction missions in support of the Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S).

OAM operates two variations of the P-3 aircraft: the P-3 Airborne Early Warning (AEW) and the P-3 Long Range Tracker (LRT). The P-3 AEW aircraft provide wide area search, and increased command, control and communications capabilities. P-3 LRT aircraft are specifically designed to intercept and track airborne smuggling threats. In the past, OAM P-3 LRT aircraft often flew in tandem with the P-3 AEW. Used in this manner, the P-3 AEW can detect and monitor airborne and maritime targets and the accompanying P-3 LRT can intercept, identify and track those suspect targets. With the new SeaVue maritime radar, the P-3s can fly separately, leading to increased operations.

Fiscal Year 2013 Performance

- OAM's P-3s flew 6,051 hours in support of counter-narcotic missions for Joint Interagency Task Force - South, directly contributing to the seizure and disruption of 119,195 pounds of cocaine, worth nearly \$9 billion. This provided a return on investment of \$1.47 million per flight hour executed in the Transit Zone.
- CBP's P-3s detected 149 suspected smuggling vessels and aircraft, averaging about 1 detected and intercepted vessels every 2 and a half days over the course of the year.



Each OAM P-3 airframe exceeds 40 years in age, and the fleet has required considerable upgrades. However, the cost of replacing the P-3 aircraft fleet significantly outweighs the maintenance and repair costs.

The Service Life Extension Program (SLEP) was designed to maximize the lifecycle of the asset. The SLEP includes two primary phases:

- The objective of the first phase of the SLEP is to keep aircraft flying safely until new wing kits can be acquired. To do this, CBP is conducting special structural inspections and repairs.
- The second phase includes the installation of new wings, upgrades to wiring and Fuel Quantity System, and some instrumentation changes. The wing replacement approach will add 15,000 flight hours to the service life of each aircraft.

The new wings will enhance flight safety, reduce maintenance costs, and improve P-3 reliability, availability, and maintainability. The SLEP will be completed in Fiscal Year 2016. OAM P-3 aircraft are strategically located in Corpus Christi, Texas, and Jacksonville, Florida, allowing for an operational focus on threats originating in the drug Transit Zones and for timely support of homeland security operations.