



## Eielson Maintainers Use AFSO 21 to Improve Performance

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1/9/2008 - **EIELSON AIR FORCE BASE, Alaska (AFPN)** -- Members of the 354th Maintenance Squadron's Aerospace Ground Equipment Flight here recently implemented Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st century initiatives to reorganize the unit to save resources and manpower.

The flight reorganized into five cells for scheduled and unscheduled maintenance and developed a 33 percent reduction of manpower with only a 20 percent reduction of equipment.

Maintenance workers said it was vital for the AGE flight to reorganize into a more efficient organization and develop a standardized workflow in order to produce quality results.

"The imbalance between personnel and equipment reductions forced us to look for ways to do more with less in order to survive and ensure mission accomplishment," said Master Sgt. Matthew Hopwood, the 354th Maintenance Squadron AGE flight chief.

Meetings with key flight members identified organizational changes that enable continued mission accomplishment with the new constraints. A high priority on structuring sections into cells provided the foundation for the AGE flight to build a lean, flexible operation.

In order to achieve this, the AGE flight members created a sort, straighten, scrub, safety, standardize and sustain initiative, called 6S. They developed a standardized layout to clearly identify the scope of each cell, removed all safety hazards and turned in all excess equipment.

Cell One inspects hydraulic test stands and air compressors. Cell Two inspects bomb lifts and generators. Cell Three inspects light carts and heaters. Cell Four inspects non-powered AGE equipment, and Cell Five completes any unscheduled maintenance, performs repairs of AGE, and handles equipment deliveries and aircraft deicing.

Each month, flight members will rotate to a new cell, allowing them to broaden skills and qualifications. After five rotations, each cell team is reconfigured into new groups to ensure standardized quality levels.

Another advantage to the new organization was an improvement in the training environment.

"With this process, we improved on-the-job training now completed in five months vs. the previous 15 months," Sergeant Hopwood said. "The most important thing is being able to do more with less and increase quality at the same time."

As for the results, "they speak for themselves," Sergeant Hopwood said.

"The methodology used to reorganize the flight was brilliant, all production channels are clear, simple and with purpose, and most importantly the results captured are proof of success," said Senior Master Sgt. Daniel Morin, the 354th Maintenance Squadron superintendent.

Performance soared after a 33 percent manning cut, the AGE flight achieved 100 percent in commission rate twice in 2007. While maintaining a 98 percent quality assurance pass rate, the flight achieved a 99 percent average in commission rate for the last year and reduced equipment down for maintenance by 98 percent within three months.



"The processes that have been created were the team effort of everyone in the flight, from the three- and five-skill level Airmen, to myself (flight chief)," Sergeant Hopwood said. "We developed a vision together and then allowed the vision to be improved through the up channeling of information from the mechanic to the supervisor, through the section leader and onto the flight chief. This continues today as we find better ways of performing the mission."

AFSO 21 helps the Air Force save time, manpower and money by increasing the productivity of its most valued asset -- its Airmen. AFSO 21 is centered on processes rather than tasks alone, so every Airman has a stake in it.

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