



# NASA Policy Directive

**NPD 8610.12F**Effective Date: February 23, 2005  
Expiration Date: February 23, 2010**COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY**[Printable Format \(PDF\)](#)

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## **Subject: Office of Space Operations (OSO) Space Transportation Services for NASA and NASA-Sponsored Payloads**

**Responsible Office: Space Operations Mission Directorate**

### **1. POLICY**

a. Consistent with law and national policy, NASA payloads will be flown on launch vehicles manufactured in the United States, unless otherwise approved by the Administrator in coordination with the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

b. The OSO shall provide/arrange space transportation services for NASA and NASA-sponsored payloads that require the Space Shuttle as well as commercial and Department of Defense (DoD) launch services, which may include Expendable Launch Vehicle (ELV), carrier systems, upper stages, or other space transportation services. In addition, the OSO may provide transportation services (e.g., Space Shuttle, ELV, etc.) to entities outside NASA on a reimbursable and/or cooperative basis.

c. The OSO shall provide use and acquisition of Space Shuttle launch services as follows:

(1) NASA will conform to the Space Shuttle Use Policy set forth in the NASA Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 1991, Section 112 and the Commercial Space Act of 1998, Section 201, as follows:

(a) Payloads will be assigned for launch on the Space Shuttle only when:

(i) The payload requires human presence; or

(ii) When the payload requires the unique capabilities of the Space Shuttle; or

(iii) When other compelling circumstances for assigning the payload to the Space Shuttle exist, such as: when commercial (ELV) launch services are not cost-effective, are not reasonably available, or would not be available when required; the use of commercial ELV launch services poses an unacceptable risk of loss of a unique scientific opportunity; or assigning the payload to the Space Shuttle serves important national security or foreign policy purposes.

(b) Space Shuttle capabilities in excess of primary mission requirements may be used to accommodate secondary payloads that do not require human presence if such payloads are consistent with NASA requirements for research, development, demonstration, scientific, commercialization, or educational purposes.

(2) Space Shuttle use will be focused on completing assembly of the International Space Station (ISS). Space Shuttle use priorities will be identified consistent with the national Space Exploration Policy. The Space Shuttle flight rate will be reviewed at least annually to ensure Agency priorities for launch on the Space Shuttle are met.

(3) A pricing policy for Space Shuttle services for any non-ISS payloads will be developed as appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

d. The OSO shall provide use and acquisition of launch services, acquired from commercial providers or DoD as follows:

(1) NASA or NASA-sponsored primary payloads will be assigned for launch to the appropriate class launch vehicle when the requirement for Space Shuttle use stated in 1.c. is not met.

(2) NASA will normally procure launch services for NASA and NASA-sponsored primary payloads from commercial providers.

(3) When commercial launch services are not available to satisfy the requirements of a NASA or NASA-sponsored

payload, the OSO may request the use of launch services from the DoD and/or foreign suppliers, consistent with law and national policy.

(4) Secondary payloads consistent with NASA requirements for research, development, demonstration, scientific, commercialization, or educational purposes may be accommodated using excess capabilities of launch services.

(5) The OSO-provided/arranged launch services costs will be funded by the NASA or NASA-sponsored payload/mission customer. Launch costs for an individual mission will be provided to the Headquarters customer at the time of service award and will be updated as appropriate during the annual Agency budget planning process. Launch costs may include the following: advanced planning/integration, launch service, mission unique hardware and analytics requirements, safety and mission assurance requirements, launch site payload processing, etc., based on individual mission requirements.

## **2. APPLICABILITY**

This NPD applies to NASA Headquarters and NASA Centers, including Component Facilities, and to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory as provided in the contract.

## **3. AUTHORITY**

- a. 42 U.S.C., 2473(c)(1), National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958, as amended.
- b. 42 U.S.C., 2465a, National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 1991, as amended.
- c. 42 U.S.C., 2466 et seq., National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act, 1986, as amended.
- d. 42 U.S.C., 14701 et seq., Commercial Space Act of 1998, as amended.

## **4. REFERENCES**

NPD 1360.2, "Initiation and Development of International Cooperation in

National Space Transportation Policy, dated December 21, 2004.

NPD 8610.7, "Launch Services Risk Mitigation Policy for NASA-Owned or NASA-Sponsored Payloads," dated February 4, 1999.

NPD 8700.3, "Safety and Mission Assurance (SMA) Policy for NASA Spacecraft, Instruments, and Launch Services," dated September 3, 2003.

Space Shuttle Program Commitment Agreement, dated January 3, 2003.

Launch Services Program Commitment Agreement, dated May 22, 2003.

## **5. RESPONSIBILITY**

a. The OSO shall:

(1) Plan and request budget approval to safely operate the Space Shuttle and to maintain sustaining technical management and acquisition capability for the Launch Services Program.

(2) Provide timely coordination with the NASA payload/mission customers with regard to OSO space transportation scheduling, technical, programmatic, financial, and policy matters.

(3) Be responsible for the Flight Planning Board (FPB), which ensures that payloads accommodated on the Space Shuttle are consistent with established Space Shuttle use policy; provides the forum for addressing user space launch requirements and priorities; ensures compliance with Agency launch services risk mitigation and vehicle assignment policy; and approves official contractual launch dates.

(4) Review and approve the annual Space Shuttle Use Policy Certification Report to Congress.

(5) Develop, maintain, and publish launch schedules in coordination with OSO customers.

(6) Endeavor to avoid adverse cost impacts to NASA space transportation customers that could result from situations such as launch schedule delays.

(7) Provide cost information on OSO space transportation services required by the payload for inclusion in the budget of the OSO customer responsible for the payload.

(8) Include the cost of payload impacts in comparative cost trades, in consultation with OSO customers, as

appropriate, and when making space transportation services planning decisions.

(9) Authorize and initiate OSO program/Center activities to meet agreed-upon requirements of the payload and the mission.

(10) Establish points of contact at OSO Centers for consultation and coordination with the NASA Center points of contact.

b. The FPB shall:

(1) Assess launch service requirements and priorities submitted by the OSO customers and develop mixed fleet manifests that best meet the requirements and capabilities of the Agency.

(2) Review and update the scheduling of OSO space transportation launches on a routine basis. Any issues that cannot be resolved at the FPB are referred to the Associate Administrator (AA) for Space Operations for resolution with the affected organizations.

c. OSO customers, including certain OSO offices, responsible for NASA or NASA-Sponsored Payloads requiring launch on the Space Shuttle and/or launch services, shall perform the following:

(1) Support, as appropriate, the activities of the OSO and FPB.

(2) Submit launch service requirements to the OSO. Such requests are to be submitted at the earliest practical date to allow inclusion in OSO budget planning.

(3) For each payload requiring space transportation services, designate a Headquarters point of contact to work with the OSO on policy, priority, scheduling, and funding matters.

(4) Provide funds for payload-specific or mission-specific OSO space transportation services.

(5) Include the cost and/or value of space transportation services in comparative cost trades and announcements of opportunity, in consultation with the OSO as appropriate, when making payload- planning decisions.

(6) Endeavor to avoid adverse cost impacts to OSO that could result from situations such as launch delays requested or caused by the payload.

(7) Provide for transportation of payloads to the launch site.

(8) For NASA-sponsored payloads, obtain the concurrence/signature of the AA for Space Operations on any proposed cooperative arrangement that would involve the commitment of the OSO space transportation services and/or use of foreign launch capability.

## **6. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY**

None.

## **7. MEASUREMENTS**

a. Compliance with the NPD will be evaluated on a continuing basis by the OSO and the OSO customers through the FPB meetings, which will consider all the factors that affect the efficient and productive accommodation of payloads on OSO-provided/arranged space transportation. These include timely and comprehensive exchange of information by both parties concerning: launch vehicle capabilities, manifests, schedules, cost of services, payload descriptions and characteristics, payload requirements, and payload schedules.

b. Annually, the OSO will review the payloads in process over the past year and identify any issues that have arisen in the areas covered by this NPD, together with corrective action to overcome the problems and minimize future occurrences of similar problems.

## **8. CANCELLATION**

NPD 8610.12D, dated July 27, 1999.

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**/s/ Frederick D. Gregory**  
**Acting Administrator**

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## **ATTACHMENT A: (TEXT)**

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**DEFINITIONS:**

- (1) Payload. A specific complement of instruments, equipment, and support hardware carried into space to accomplish a mission or a discrete activity in space.
- (2) NASA Payload. A payload developed by a NASA Mission Directorate or office, either in-house or under contract.
- (3) NASA-Sponsored Payload. A payload provided by a non-NASA entity under formal agreement with a NASA Mission Directorate or office; e.g., international cooperative payloads, NASA space commercialization payloads.
- (4) OSO Customer. An office (a Mission Directorate or other office) within NASA Headquarters responsible for a particular NASA or NASA- sponsored payload (including the International Space Station and Space Communications Offices within the OSO).

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