

NASA Advisory Council Recommendation

Planetary Protection Procedural Requirements Document for Human Extraterrestrial Missions 2012-03-04 (SC-01)

Recommendation:

The NASA Advisory Council recommends that NASA develop the appropriate implementing document to specify planetary protection procedural requirements for human extraterrestrial missions at a level corresponding to the current COSPAR (Committee on Space Research) planetary protection policy, and update it as new knowledge becomes available.

Major Reasons for Proposing the Recommendation:

NASA Policy Directive 8020.7G on "Biological Contamination Control for Outbound and Inbound Planetary Spacecraft" requires the development of detailed documents delineating the standards and procedures implementing compliance with planetary protection standards and procedures for human spaceflight missions. Currently, however, no such documents exist for human missions.

Consequences of No Action on the Proposed Recommendation:

NASA will be out of compliance with its own policy requirements as it plans the prominent flagship missions of human exploration and with international agreements to which the U.S. is a party.

NASA Response:

NASA concurs. A core team is now in place and has been briefed on the task of creating the subject NASA Procedural Requirements (NPR) document. The core team consists of representatives from:

Human Exploration and Operation Mission Directorate
Advanced Exploration Systems Division
Exploration Systems Development Division
Space Life and Physical Sciences Research and Applications Division
Strategic Analysis and Integration Division
Science Mission Directorate
Planetary Protection Officer
Office of the Chief Health and Medical Officer
Office of Chief Scientist
Office of the General Counsel
Office of International and Interagency Relations

This team will draft, review, and revise, as appropriate, an NPR document over the course of the next calendar year. NASA has significantly contributed to the large body of prior work on this subject, and the team comprises a number of individuals responsible for that work.

Enclosure

We intend to execute the following tasks over the course of calendar year 2013. In the first quarter, a draft NPR will be developed. Key reviewers have been identified, and subsequent edits will be adjudicated and incorporated. An early draft NPR is currently in work. In parallel, the team will prepare required supporting materials. During the second quarter, the review will be broadened to the NASA stakeholder base. Comments and concerns will be identified, and vetted responses will be incorporated into the draft NPR and supporting materials. The third quarter will be allotted for the NPR to be submitted to and reviewed within the NASA Online Directives Information System. Final approval and circulation for signatures will be sought in the fourth quarter.

The team is ready to brief this approach at the request of the Council or any of its Committees or Subcommittees. The draft document will be available for briefing in the summer 2013 time frame.