

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Office of the Administrator
Washington, DC 20546-0001



August 30, 2010

Vice Admiral Joseph W. Dyer, USN (Ret.)
Chairman
Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Washington, DC 20546

JOE
Dear Admiral Dyer:

Enclosed is NASA's response to Recommendation 2010-02-02 from the 2010 Second Quarterly Meeting of the Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel (ASAP). Please do not hesitate to contact me if the ASAP would like further background on the information provided in the enclosure.

I look forward to receiving continued advice from the ASAP that results from your important fact-finding and quarterly meetings.

Sincerely, *Charles F. Bolden, Jr.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CF Bolden Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Charles F. Bolden, Jr.
Administrator

Enclosure

NASA Responses to Tracking Number 2010-02-02 Mishap Investigation Process and Plan

Finding

The ASAP has been following NASA's process and metrics on mishap investigations. There is good news: the backlog of outstanding items has been greatly reduced. However, NASA is still not yet where it needs to be. ASAP still continues to ask that the safety metrics Agency-wide be rolled up and shared quarterly (reference Recommendations 2008-02-07 and 2009-03-03); these "roll-up" metrics have not yet been provided to the Panel. Additionally, another question is how commercial will do mishap investigations. For Commercial Resupply Services (CRS), a decision has been to not treat loss of cargo as a mishap. There are other decisions that should be described in the Mishap Investigation Plan.

Recommendations

Each of the Center Directors should exercise the appropriate leadership to make sure other Centers get mishap information. It is not just central leadership that is required, but leadership at all of the Centers. One activity that is commonly used in industry is a briefing between senior managers, e.g., if there is an injury, the manager reports that to his or her peers and to senior management. NASA should consider implementing such an approach. In addition, the ASAP would like a copy of the commercial mishap investigation plan, when available.

Rationale

Mishap investigation is a leadership effort that the senior leaders have to own. If NASA acts on the lessons learned, the Agency will have fewer incidents in the future.

NASA Response

NASA appreciates ASAP's recognition that NASA has reduced its backlog of mishap items. NASA's specific responses to each part of this recommendation are as follows:

The ASAP has recommended that NASA consider taking additional steps to ensure sharing of mishap-related information among the Agency, especially on a peer-to-peer basis among senior management. NASA agrees that more can be done to share mishap lessons among senior leaders. NASA will discuss options for implementing this recommendation at the next NASA Safety and Mission Assurance Directors' meeting and will subsequently discuss the resulting implementation options with NASA senior management. In the meantime, NASA will require Centers and program directors to brief their recent class A and B mishaps at the monthly Baseline Performance Reviews. Also, the convening authorities for A and B mishaps will brief the Monday morning leadership video teleconferences using a template similar to that used by the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance for its monthly safety messages.

Each NASA program and launch-site has its own Mishap Preparedness and Contingency Plan. NASA interprets the request in 2010-02-02 to be the same as the request made verbally in the NASA briefing to ASAP where ASAP requested the development of the

Enclosure

CRS Mishap Preparedness and Contingency Plan. This plan is still under development. When it is completed and signed by all responsible organizations, NASA will provide a copy to the ASAP.

This finding references two previous recommendations: 2008-02-07 and 2009-03-03, both of which discussed timelines of mishap investigations and administrative follow-up. NASA believes the briefings given to the Panel in April and July of this year are responsive to these recommendations, and, as recommended, the NASA Safety Center will continue to brief mishap investigation process statistics and trends at each quarterly meeting.

With respect to rolled-up Agency-wide safety metrics, the NASA Safety Center presented the latest set of data at the July 2010 meeting and received verbal feedback from the Panel on suggested enhancements. NASA is currently assessing the feasibility of these suggested changes and will report results at the next quarterly meeting.