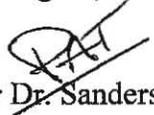


National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration  
**Office of the Administrator**  
Washington, DC 20546-0001



January 17, 2017

Dr. Patricia Sanders  
Chair  
NASA Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel  
Washington, DC 20546

  
Dear Dr. Sanders:

Enclosed is NASA's response to the Asset Protection – Security Clearance Policy recommendation from the Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel (ASAP) Fourth Quarterly Meeting held on October 6, 2016, at the NASA Johnson Space Center. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you or the Panel would like further background on the response.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Bolden, Jr.", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Charles F. Bolden, Jr.  
Administrator

Enclosure:  
2016-04-01 Asset Protection – Security Clearance Policy

## **NASA Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel Recommendation**

### **2016-04-01: Asset Protection – Security Clearance Policy**

**Date of Panel Public Deliberation:**                   **October 6, 2016**

**Short Title of Recommendation:**                   **Asset Protection – Security Clearance Policy**

#### **Finding:**

NASA is taking a holistic approach to asset protection, linking space asset protection, cyber security, and critical infrastructure on the ground. The identification of Mr. James Leatherwood as Principal Advisor to the Associate Administrator and establishing an Enterprise Protection Program modeled after the Technical Authorities is a positive step. The Panel was gratified to see that NASA is taking a holistic approach and starting down the path of putting in place the management policies and practices to have an effective Enterprise Protection Program. While there are many challenges ahead, one of the big challenges to an effective program is having appropriate clearances for the appropriate people in the Agency who make the decisions to protect assets from threats. Currently, there are too many cases where security clearances are lacking. NASA has put in place a system to work around these difficulties, but it is not optimum.

#### **Recommendation:**

NASA should make it a matter of policy that priority is given to obtaining the appropriate level of security clearance for all personnel essential to implementing the Enterprise Protection Program, including the appropriate program managers.

#### **Rationale:**

The appropriate people in the Agency need to have to have a level of clearance necessary to understand the threat, make the proper decisions, and allocate the proper resources. When a new program manager is coming online, if he or she does not have the appropriate security clearance already, submitting the necessary paperwork may not be high on the new manager's list of tasks. NASA needs a policy to put a high priority on the submission of appropriate clearance paperwork.

#### **NASA Response:**

NASA concurs. NASA is establishing clearance requirements within the governance management system of the Enterprise Protection Program. The Charter of the Enterprise Protection Board, as part of the Enterprise Protection Program, lays out specific requirements for the Agency leadership and the proposed technical authority subject matter experts working within the Enterprise Protection Program. Specifically, the Enterprise Protection Board members and the technical authority subject matter experts will be required to maintain a minimum security clearance, at a level appropriate to review the relevant Enterprise Protection Program Board materials. Specific program and project management classification requirements will depend on the technologies and capabilities of

those whose specific work effort may require more or fewer requirements than those of the Enterprise Protection Board or the subject matter expert technical authorities. Further, NASA recognizes that the threat environment that it works within is changing continuously and that NASA must be vigilant to those changes and be open to modifying its clearance requirements in order to adequately address those malicious risks.