

National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration  
**Headquarters**  
Washington, DC 20546-0001



**JAN 14 2003**

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**TO:** Q/Associate Administrator for Safety and Mission Assurance  
H/Associate Administrator for Procurement

**FROM:** W/Assistant Inspector General for Audits

**SUBJECT:** Continued Need for the NASA Safety Reporting System (NSRS)  
Assignment Number A-02-006-01

We are providing information from our audit survey for your use in determining whether to exercise a June 2003 option to extend the contract for the NSRS.

Our work indicates that the NSRS may duplicate other safety reporting systems and that its use and effectiveness have been affected because NASA did not adequately promote the program or provide guidance for consistent administration, and employees lacked awareness of the system's benefits.

Agency emphasis on reporting safety concerns at the lowest level has resulted in the development of Center-specific, anonymous reporting systems, such as the close call reporting system. Employees are also able to anonymously report safety hazards through the Ombudsman Program and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Complaint Process. Employees are reporting more concerns through the local systems than through the NSRS. For example, from May 1999 to March 2002, Johnson Space Center generated 47 percent of the NSRS reports. Johnson's close call reports for fiscal year 2002 averaged about 70 a month, whereas Agencywide, the NSRS averaged only 1 to 2 reports a month. Moreover, from May 1999 to March 2002, 50 (83 percent) of the 60 NSRS-reported concerns were previously reported through other reporting mechanisms. Management considered only 7 (12 percent) of those 60 reports to be immediate concerns.

In the event that NASA exercises the contract option for the NSRS program, the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance should take steps to improve program use and effectiveness by addressing the following conditions:

- the NSRS contractor had not promoted the NSRS program at NASA Centers or contractor sites;

- the NASA Office of Safety and Mission Assurance did not provide guidance to Center personnel to ensure consistent administration (for example, investigative report approvals, file administration, etc.) of the NSRS; and
- Agency employees believed the NSRS was limited to the Space Shuttle program or to Headquarters-related safety concerns.

We found that NASA and the NSRS contractor effectively notified the appropriate NASA Centers of safety concerns reported, and that the Centers' personnel appropriately addressed, dispositioned, and resolved those concerns.

We are terminating work on this assignment. Please provide us a written response identifying your decision on the contract option. We appreciate the courtesies and cooperation provided to the auditors during the survey. If you have questions, or would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Ms. Sandy Massey, Program Director, Safety and Technology Audits, at (321) 867-4057, or Ms. Kathleen Kirby, Auditor-in-Charge, at (281) 483-2733.



Alan J. Lamoreaux

cc:

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