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TO: J/Associate Administrator for Management Systems  
Q/Associate Administrator for Safety and Mission Assurance

FROM: W/Assistant Inspector General for Inspections, Administrative  
Investigations, and Assessments

SUBJECT: Rapid Action Notice – Use of Cellular Phones in Government Vehicles,  
G-01-031

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) recently issued the subject rapid action notice which addresses a significant safety concern with employee use of cellular phones while operating Government motor vehicles.<sup>1</sup> Our notice cited a concern that NASA and General Services Administration (GSA) had not established Agency or Federal guidance for employees regarding the use of handheld cellular phones while driving a U.S. Government vehicle<sup>2</sup> or other vehicles while on official duty (see Enclosure 1).

Accordingly, we recommended that NASA management review this issue and develop safety and transportation guidelines and awareness measures accordingly, and/or coordinate with GSA for Governmentwide application.

Management acknowledged our concern and appointed staff to review the safety issues and to formulate a recommended course of action (see Enclosure 2). Subsequently, NASA management implemented corrective action in response to our recommendation and issued guidance to all NASA

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<sup>1</sup> Our report noted that New York recently became the first state to pass statewide legislation banning the use of handheld cellular phones by drivers of motor vehicles.<sup>1</sup> This law goes into effect November 1, 2001. Effective immediately, all New York State employees are barred from using State-issued handheld cellular phones while driving and are prohibited from using any handheld cell phone while driving a State vehicle. Currently, more than 40 states have proposed measures similar to New York's ban on handheld cellular phone use in cars.

<sup>2</sup> NASA operates a large motor vehicle fleet and the Agency routinely authorizes rental cars for its employees on official travel. NASA has also experienced widespread proliferation of Government and ODIN cellular phones, and many in the NASA work force own personal cellular phones (which could be used in Government vehicles, travel rentals, and their personally owned vehicles).

employees. This guidance prohibits the use of hand-held wireless (cellular) phones by NASA employees when driving motor vehicles owned, leased, or rented

by the Federal Government, and reminds employees that they should obey applicable State and local laws (see Enclosure 3). We consider management's reply to be fully responsive and our recommendation contained in the notice to be closed.

David M. Cushing

Enclosures (3)

cc:

A/Mr. Goldin

AA/Mr. Stadd

AB/Mr. Christensen

AI/Dr. Mulville

AO/Mr. Holcomb

JM/Mr. Werner

L/Mr. Bingham

P/Ms. Cleggett

Q/Ms. Moore