

IAF SYMPOSIUM ON COMMERCIAL SPACEFLIGHT SAFETY ISSUES (D6)
Commercial Spaceflight Safety and Emerging Issues (1)

Author: Dr. Marc M. Cohen
Space Cooperative Inc., United States, marc@space.coop

REVIEW OF THE 2014 FAA RECOMMENDED PRACTICES FOR COMMERCIAL SPACEFLIGHT
CREW SAFETY.

Abstract

In 2014, the FAA published its first set of recommendations for commercial crew spaceflight. These Guidelines purvey several fundamental, systemic errors. The three major findings that expose these flaws include:

- Profound problems with the clarity of the language, particularly the subjunctive tense in which all the recommendations are written,
- Conflating of the occupational limits and flight regime requirements for the flight crew and the passengers, and
- The dumbed-down presentation of risk management and reliability strategies.

The central cause of these pervasive flaws would appear to derive from the FAA's ambivalence toward regulating commercial spaceflight as opposed to promoting it. The FAA wants to frame the regulatory regime with good intentions without dictating to the commercial companies how to conduct their business of flying people in space for profit. This approach creates situations in which the recommended practice is not appropriate for the problem it seeks to solve. This review covers the major findings that came out of the section-by-section gap analysis.