



**Department of Energy**  
**National Nuclear Security Administration**  
**Categorical Exclusion Determination Form**



**Categorical Exclusion ID#:** NV-2023-022

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**Proposed Action Title:** NASA Astronaut Training - 1

**Program or Field Office:** Nevada Field Office

**Location(s) (City/County/State):** Nevada National Security Site, Nye County, NV

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**Proposed Action Description**

The purpose of the project would be for NASA to conduct astronaut training exercises to simulate data collection for upcoming missions. The training would take place at the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS) in Area 7 around the Icecap facility and near the Area 20 Schooner Crater. The proposed training would be several days and include night-time training exercises over a one-week timeframe. These would simulate Extravehicular Activities on the surface of the moon, similar to training performed on the NNSS in the 1960s.

The training would consist of one or more preplanned team scenarios in which team members may be equipped with a variety of data collection equipment. In these training scenarios, teams would be collecting data (e.g., electronic, surface soil samples) and transmitting these to a receiver.

Surface soil sample collection would be limited to 8-inches below ground surface and all soil collected would be returned to the point of origin. No soil would leave the immediate collection point at the Icecap facility or the Schooner Crater RMA.

A staging area would be established in a previously disturbed parking area near Icecap and a generator may be used to provide power to NASA equipment, including computer equipment, lights, command center, and an air compressor. At the Schooner Crater, a parking area would be established along the existing road. No grading or land disturbance (other than at the sample collection points) would be necessary to facilitate this training exercise.

All training would be controlled and supervised by a controller(s) assigned to each major element.

The following is a description of the exercise:

1. Personnel would be escorted by Management and Operating (M&O) Contractor personnel in



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vehicles from Mercury to the selected location.

2. A temporary, battery-powered light would be placed on the roof of Icecap for visual observation purposes, simulating the rocket as if on the surface of the moon. Once training is completed, the light would be removed as part of the demobilization process.

3. Vehicles and personnel would only access locations via existing roads, walkways, and parking areas. No off-road driving is required.

4. Data collection would be performed by personnel on foot in and around selected locations.

5. Personnel would demobilize from selected locations and be transported via M&O Contractor personnel escorts in vehicles back to Mercury.

Activities include foot and/or vehicle use on existing dirt roads with global positioning system equipment to accomplish the objective of data collection.

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**Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied**

10 CFR 1021 B1.2 Training exercises and simulations

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**Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021**

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of 10 CFR 1021.

**To find that a proposal is categorically excluded, DOE shall determine the following:**

(1) The proposal fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D;

(2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and

(3) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. The proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.



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**The classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, include the following conditions as integral elements of the classes of actions. To fit within the classes of actions in Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not:** (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (5) involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

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**NEPA Compliance Officer Determination**

Based on my review of information conveyed to me and in my possession concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under NNSA NAP 451.1 and DOE P 451.1), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action and I have reviewed the proposal for integral elements. I have determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances present and that the proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. Therefore, the application of a categorical exclusion is appropriate.

NEPA Compliance Officer: Patricia Gallo

Date Determined: April 17, 2023