

Space Governance and Interplanetary Jurisdiction

M14

SPACE & EXTREME
ENVIRONMENTS

1967

LAST MAJOR SPACE GOVERNANCE
TREATY

0

CREW RIGHTS LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

2027

NEXT CREWED MISSION BEYOND LEO

THE GOVERNANCE PROBLEM

Legal and ethical frameworks governing human activity in space were designed for robotic probes and brief orbital missions. The Outer Space Treaty (1967) establishes state responsibility but does not address crew rights, medical ethics, mission control authority over individual crew members, or institutional accountability in environments with no external oversight. Long-duration missions, commercial space operations, and future permanent settlements require governance infrastructure that does not yet exist.

EVIDENCE BASE

Treaty on Principles Governing Activities in Outer Space (1967) · 610 U.N.T.S. 205

Foundational space governance document

"States bear international responsibility for national space activities. No provision addresses individual crew rights, medical ethics, or intra-mission governance."

NASA (2020). The Artemis Accords: Principles for Cooperation in Peaceful Exploration

Bilateral space governance framework — addresses transparency and heritage sites, not crew governance

"Addresses transparency, interoperability, and orbital debris. Does not address crew autonomy, medical authority, conflict resolution, or post-mission reintegration."

Kanas, N., & Manzey, D. (2008). Space Psychology and Psychiatry, 2nd ed. Springer. doi:10.1007/978-1-4020-6770-9

Primary evidence base for crew governance risk in long-duration spaceflight

"Interpersonal conflict, communication difficulties with mission control, and inadequate autonomy are the most significant predictors of mission risk — none addressed by current legal frameworks."

Stuster, J. (2010). Behavioral Issues in Long-Duration Space Expeditions. NASA TM-2010-216130

Analog environment research translated into space governance principles

"Governance structures that preserve crew autonomy, provide independent accountability mechanisms, and establish clear authority boundaries produce significantly better behavioral health outcomes."

SIX GOVERNANCE DIMENSIONS

1	Legal framework and jurisdictional clarity
2	Crew rights and autonomy governance
3	Medical and clinical governance
4	Community and social governance
5	Commercial and institutional accountability
6	Post-mission reintegration governance

PIONEERING GOVERNANCE

Documented legal framework addressing jurisdiction and applicable law for off-Earth operations; written crew autonomy protocol including the right to refuse mission directives on documented health grounds; clinical governance framework for autonomous healthcare beyond Earth-based consultation range; formal conflict resolution and privacy protocols; independent accountability mechanism external to operational command; post-mission reintegration protocol with health information confidentiality protections.

WHO SHOULD PRIORITIZE THIS MODULE

- Space agencies and mission directors
- Commercial space operators (SpaceX, Blue Origin, Axiom Space)
- Aerospace medicine programs
- Space law practitioners and researchers
- Astronaut training programs
- University space policy programs
- NASA Human Research Program partners

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