

SYNOPSIS OF FAA REGULATORY REGIME HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

The Office of the Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation (AST) is the only space-related line of business within the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Established in 1984 as the Office of Commercial Space Transportation (OCST) in the Department of Transportation (DOT), AST was transferred to the FAA in November 1995. The office is headed by the Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation. AST is headquartered in Washington, DC with a safety office in Patrick AFB, FL that interacts with the Eastern and Western ranges.

Under Title 49, U.S. Code, Subtitle IX, Sections 70101-70119 (formerly the Commercial Space Launch Act), AST is given the responsibility to:

- regulate the commercial space transportation industry, only to the extent necessary, to ensure compliance with international obligations of the United States and to protect the public health and safety, safety of property, and national security and foreign policy interest of the United States;
- encourage, facilitate, and promote commercial space launches and re-entries by the private sector;
- recommend appropriate changes in Federal statutes, treaties, regulations, policies, plans, and procedures; and
- facilitate the strengthening and expansion of the United States space transportation infrastructure.

In fulfilling its responsibilities under Title 49, AST issues launch licenses and permits for commercial launches of orbital rockets and suborbital rockets that are not classified as model, amateur, or "by and for the government," however there have been circumstances where AST has licensed launches of US government payloads. The first U.S. licensed launch was a suborbital launch of a Starfire vehicle on March 29, 1989. Since then, FAA AST has authorized over 330 launches and reentries.

AST also licenses the operations of non-federal launch sites, or "spaceports." Since 1996, FAA AST has issued site operator licenses for 10 commercial launch and reentry sites. The first launch from a licensed facility was NASA's Lunar Prospector aboard a Lockheed Martin Athena 2 on January 6, 1998, from Spaceport Florida. In 2004 the first manned FAA licensed reusable launch vehicle reached suborbital space after an airborne launch from the Mojave Spaceport.

Along with the space launch and spaceport progress, AST continues to develop regulations and guidelines to accommodate the dynamics of the launch industry. A common standards working group has been established to ensure common and coordinated Air Force MAJCOM safety directives and FAA regulations. More information on AST and access to the regulations can be found online at: <http://ast.faa.gov/>