



Equipment Management Newsletter

From the Logistics Management Division

Volume 3, Issue 2

June 2013

Welcome. This newsletter is brought to you by the Logistics Management Division (LMD). Its purpose is to keep you abreast of the latest business practices, to share information of ongoing management initiatives and events promoted by the equipment management program. It also introduces interim policy letters, which shall be incorporated in forthcoming updates of NASA Procedural Directives and Procedural Requirements.

RFID Technology at NASA

NASA has continued to investigate the potential application of RFID technology to enhance the management of its equipment. The improved features of RFID and the demonstrated interest of NASA Centers to transition into a more technical asset management environment to increase the accuracy of asset accountability and reduce the cost and time to conduct physical inventories, prompted the Logistics Division in 2010 to engage in an RFID study and make an assessment of its applicability. As part of the study, staff members from HQs LMD contacted various Federal Agencies to gain implementation lessons learned.

The study concluded that implementing RFID - although a good business practice - was budget restrictive for NASA at that time.

However, the dialog to implement RFID continued,

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Cancellation of NPR 4200.2B (Equipment Management Manual for Property Custodians)

NPR 4200.2B will be cancelled when reaching expiration on July 11, 2015, or sooner. HQ, LMD reached this decision because NPR 4200.2B mainly repeats the content found in NPR 4200.1G (NASA Equipment Management Procedural Requirements). The roles and responsibilities of Property Custodians outlined in NPR 4200.2B will be updated and included in NPR 4200.1G.

The function of the Property Custodian, either part-time or full-time and regardless of the level of designation, is highly important in the success of the equipment management program. Stay tuned for developments in this topic. ❖

Kudos

In this opportunity, HQs, LMD recognizes ARC's logisticians for the excellent equipment management awareness program the Center implemented to promote equipment accountability and the physical inventory process. This initiative clearly demonstrates the dedication and aggressiveness of the Center to heighten the equipment management program and reduce equipment losses.

I share with you some pictures of the banners and other displays developed by ARC and posted in common areas throughout the center. These displays bring awareness to Center personnel of the upcoming physical inventory campaign and how to prepare for the inventory. Well Done!

SEMOs and Equipment Managers enhance their business practices by educating stakeholders or

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especially at Langley. LaRC took a significant step to reduce time and resources required to complete its physical inventory campaign. The Center partially self-funded and attained additional IT resources to augment the effort which permitted partial implementation of RFID technology to manage NASA-held equipment.

The primary results – as I witnessed in an RFID demonstration at LaRC - are the remarkable reduction of time committed to conduct the physical inventory, and improved accuracy of the system to identify items as these move from one room to another. LaRC uses passive tags to identify equipment items and their location, enabling the Center to cut the time to inventory 3,000 items from three weeks to one day.

LaRC's aggressiveness and success story with RFID, current budget constraints and reduction of other resources, and the updated Agency requirement for Centers to complete physical inventories annually, prompted the Centers Operation Directors to join efforts and present budget proposals to implement RFID technology as an Agency solution. HQs LMD has taken the lead in budget formulation and has submitted the budget request for FY-15.

In the meantime, LaRC is transitioning into a pilot program. The funding support from HQs LMD to LaRC will enable the Center to acquire the necessary RFID equipment, labels and professional training to fully implement this technology and enroll 100% of its equipment density. We will share results as these become available. ❖

PP&E Training at Marshall

I am pleased to announce that MSFC Logistics Service Office has been designated as the centralized training Center to provide a comprehensive IAM PP&E/DSPL & MMI system training for the Agency.

The tentative schedule for FY-13 included two (one week long) PP&E classes: an IAM and PP&E DSPL Training in April, and one MMI course just completed in June.

The need for a system focused centralized training site exists since the initial set up training and implementation of IAM PP&E in June 2008. The turnover of personnel across the Agency, as well as the requirement for contractors operating onsite to utilize the IAM/SAP tools, has increase awareness of the need for the establishment of formal training. Centers developed and

implemented their own training plans and presentation packages; however, these training plans are inclined to be Center specific. The establishment and delivery of centralized training activities have the potential to convey the standardization of business practices across the Agency.

It is the appropriate timing to initiate this activity; the Equipment, Disposal and Material Management Programs are undergoing key policy changes and updates which, without doubt demand a systematic Agency approach for the conduction of business practices moving forward. This training initiative will supports that effort.

As you probably know, operating environments differ from Center to Center, and this is mainly because of the resources made available to the equipment management community, or the mission the community supports. For instance, while some Centers have full-time Property Custodians, or are fully supported by service contracts, others don't. Some Centers have a tight accountability of "Administratively Controlled Items," others do not. Therefore, this training will be presented in general terms; it will not be Center specific, and will be in strict accordance with NASA's regulatory policy directives and requirements.

The training focuses on the following critical IAM PP&E functional areas: Equipment & Inventory Management, the function of the Property Custodian, Business Warehouse (BW) and DiSPoSAL (DSPL) reporting tools. MMI training will cover required business process functions. Centers will be required to provide funding for their personnel to travel to MSFC to take the training.

MSFC has been asked to provide a cost estimate for a combined course that could be provided on site at a particular Center. ❖

Article of Interest

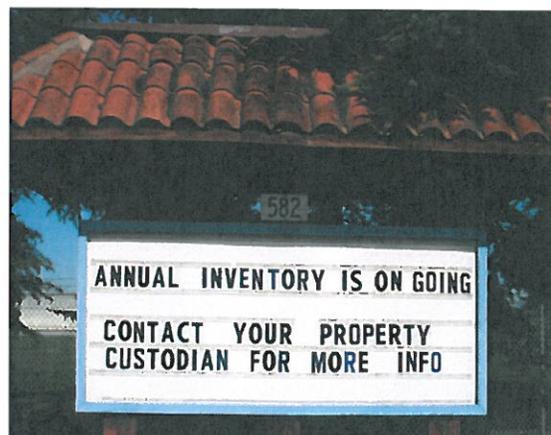
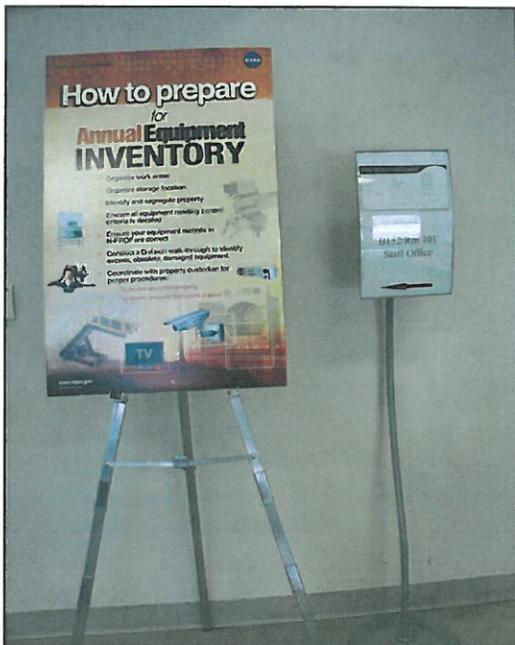
In this edition, the article of interest "*Allowing Your Property Custodians to SOAR*" focuses on the important role of Property Custodians in the equipment management program. The article is written by Dave Fick - from NPMA's NOVA Chapter - in which he compares the duties, responsibilities, and training of a Property Custodian drawn from his experiences as a property manager to his experiences as an aircraft pilot.

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bringing awareness of correct property stewardship to personnel across the Center. There are other ways to enhance education and get the message across:

- Develop simplified training materials to use in custodial training sessions.
- Design a brochure as a tool to market your intention to employees, using simple language that is easily understood.
- Develop short briefings on the most visible issues related to loss of property, then schedule time with each department to present your briefing.
- Design an internal Center website with electronic documents, frequently asked questions, resource links for policies and procedures, contact information, newest updates in business practices, training resources, etc.
- Design flyers for display throughout the Center to remind employees of proper procedures for equipment accountability, reutilization and disposal.
- Design handouts or brochures dealing with specific phases of the equipment management life cycle (ex, Receipt, Maintenance, Inventory, Storage, Excess Reporting, etc).

There are probably more methods to get the word out that I haven't mentioned here. Continuous exposure to the issues surrounding the loss of property is the key to some level of success. If you have something unique at your Center please let me know so that I can share with everyone in the next Newsletter. ❖



I take this opportunity to highlight the important role that NASA's Property Custodians – either part-time or full-time – play in the success of the Agency's equipment management program. It is vital for the program that Center logistics managers allocate the resources to properly train and to encourage the involvement of Property Custodians in the daily activities and transactions surrounding equipment management.

Allowing Your Property Custodians to SOAR

By Dave Fick, CPPS, NPMA NOVA Chapter

"Descending through the clouds, we are unable to see ten feet in front of the plane. The autopilot calls out, "five-hundred," indicating that we are five-hundred feet above our minimum descent altitude. As we continue downward, we hear "minimums." At that point, we look up, pop out of the clouds, and see a beautifully lit runway ahead of us. As the plane lands, I can't help but think about how thankful I am that my studies, training, and practice adequately prepared me to take control of such an event.

Fast-forward to a Monday morning and I'm back in the office. Our team is in the thick of our annual physical inventory and days seem to come and go with the blink of an eye. I respond to the inquiries of users in the field, troubleshoot system issues, and provide information on the spot to auditors. Although my career in property management is extremely different than my lifelong hobby of flying planes, it dawns on me that the same principals of training, preparation, concentration, and attention to detail are what allow me to direct my course – both in the air and in the office.

When I'm flying the friendly skies, nothing makes me more calm and confident than knowing that I have the proper training under my belt. To a pilot, staying ahead of the aircraft is half the battle. Flying is made easier because I can anticipate the upcoming events and have time to prepare for them. Training and adequate preparation are the two most important factors that allow a pilot to fly a plane – nothing is a substitute for knowledge and experience. In this regard, the property world is not much different from the open sky. A well trained property team is the foundation of any property function. Training ensures everyone is familiar with procedures and processes around property management as well as how to use property software.

In my experience, a property custodian who is not adequately trained is about as good as a pilot who has never flown an aircraft. Granted, the consequences resulting from an untrained pilot are more fatal than

those resulting from an untrained property custodian, but both are grave in their own way.

A property team that hasn't completed requisite training likely isn't aware of the processes surrounding property management, and team members are probably not performing day-to-day tasks and transactions in the property system of record. So, what happens when a laptop with Personally Identifiable Information (PII) goes missing? Was anyone tracking its lifecycle, location changes, or maintenance activities? Who was recorded as the last user? Does anyone know what data is stored on the laptop? The property custodian is the person who can prevent such an event, or provide useful information if the event occurs, unless that property custodian hasn't been keeping up with his or her duties because of poor (or at times non-existent) training. The lack of training tends to lead to custodians learning their duties as they go along which often leads to a "fire drill" event based around an audit or inventory. The last place you want an untrained custodian is in a vital position during crunch time. You wouldn't want to learn that there was an untrained pilot in the front of your plane during an engine failure, would you?

While training can seem like a hefty mission, a straightforward, organized training plan will ensure the success of the program. It is important to identify the "who" and the "what." First identify *who* will need property training and then *what* they should be trained to do.

Many different groups may need to be trained on different parts of the property process, and it would be inefficient to train everyone on everything. To implement a more focused training program, it is best to take a look at each individual role in the property process and focus the training on that specific area.

While adequate training is certainly important, it is equally crucial that property custodians use their training to stay current with the new technologies and ever-changing rules and regulations that govern our industry. Keeping abreast of these advancements allow property custodians to streamline processes while maintaining organizational and regulatory compliance.

Even with an adequate training program, a property custodian who only focuses on property management once a year during inventory time will not sustain or polish his or her skills enough to maintain software proficiency throughout the year or be aware of issues affecting the profession. When the time comes to put their training to work and their abilities have diminished, precious time can be wasted.

The same concept holds true in the profession of aviation. Pilots must fly regularly to maintain their skill, feel for the aircraft, and proficiency with aircraft systems and aviation guidelines. They too must keep current with aviation procedures, rules, and regulations which can change as often as daily in this day and age of security protocols. A pilot must follow all rules and regulations, and they must follow them with great precision, because they know that they fit into a complex system of traffic in the air. If a pilot makes a mistake, it could impact people in their plane, those in other aircraft, or bystanders on the ground. Flying is not like riding a bike, and neither is effectively managing property. Both pilots and property custodians must use and hone their skills throughout the year and stay current with their professions in order to execute their tasks effectively. After all, they are both part of a bigger picture and must always remember that.

The bigger picture may be easier to visualize in terms of aviation. We can all appreciate that hundreds of aircraft can share the same airspace and have to work in concert. While those unfamiliar with the aviation world only think of being a pilot as an extremely enchanting activity which allows one to climb freely into the skies, this is because only the glamorous parts of aviation are widely known. What many don't consider are the many small, tedious checks that must be completed before takeoff, a flight plan that has to take into account fuel, weather, airspace restrictions, and a long period of waiting and communicating on the ground, all of which must be completed accurately before a pilot can think about taking the initial roll down the runway. It's at that point when all the requisite tasks come together for a flawless flight. Although monotonous at times, a pilot's attention to those lackluster tasks is vital to ensure the safety of those in the air and on the ground.

This concept is no different from the property function working in tandem with all other business units of an organization. Sure, there are mundane tasks which need to be performed as part of a property custodian's

duties. But the thing that gets the pilot through his or her pre-flight checks is the same thing that pushes the property custodian to complete their daily chores to the best of their ability – their recognition of the bigger picture and how they fit into it. For instance, a property custodian might identify inefficiencies in receiving or disposal processes as a result of the tasks they are involved in daily. By implementing a new process, cost savings could be realized—an improvement that could significantly affect the organization's bottom line. This is why it is not only important to explain the details of assignment to custodians, but to stress *why* they are performing their function.

Anyone will become discouraged when asked to complete a task if it's not clear why the task needs to be completed in the first place. Allowing property custodians to understand that their duties are part of a bigger picture that goes beyond property management, and explaining that their tasks affect the overall bottom line is fundamental to their success and, in turn, the success of the property process. People are more apt to take their roles and responsibilities seriously if they know they are contributing to a greater good.

At this point, both the pilot and property custodian know what their tasks are and why they are performing them, and they've been provided adequate training to execute them. What then, is the final piece of the puzzle that must be present to ensure overall success? By making sure that they both put their knowledge and training to work in the best way possible by fully engaging in their work.

One of the great joys of flying is to leave the surface of the earth for a short time. This is an indescribable feeling. A pilot gets to leave the safe ground and the worries of daily life behind. When flying, there is no time to think about the family, worry about work, or plan ahead for future events. While the pilot is in the cockpit, the cockpit is the pilot's entire world. Thus, a pilot must be fully committed to the task at hand. The concentration that forces (or enables) the pilot to leave daily life behind also ensures a safe flight. The pilot is one person operating one aircraft, and must give that 100% of his attention.

Comparably, a property custodian's job must command full attention. Is it wise for one property custodian to be personally accountable for 5,000 assets across 10 locations? That is about as wise as it would be for one pilot to be flying three planes at once. Property

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custodians must be adequately assigned depending on an organization's mission, and those custodians must be fully engaged at all times. All too often, the job of "property custodian" is not an employee's primary or only responsibility, forcing it to take a backseat to other tasks, which is when things fall through the cracks. In the world of property management, this might be as serious as a vial of biological agent getting into the wrong hands, or a server that supports hundreds of sites crashing because of inadequate facility conditions. Again, a non-engaged property custodian is about as good as a non-engaged pilot. If the idea of the latter sounds horrifying to you (as it should), then why do we allow our custodians to be pulled in many directions at once? It's about as silly a thought as allowing your pilot to leave the cockpit during takeoff in order to serve sodas to the passengers. Just as in the world of aviation, a custodian must be fully engaged in order to yield the best results for the property function as a whole.

When taking to the air, I am confident in my role. I know that I have the training, experience, and focus to keep myself safe as well as those around me. My actions impact the aviation community and my preparedness helps to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all. When taking to tasks in the office, these concepts that I mentioned above are just as important. A well trained, fully engaged property custodian who is given perspective can be a great asset to the property function and the organization as a whole. Whether in the air or on the ground, the same principles of training, preparation, concentration, and attention to detail are what gives any team member the ability to soar!" ❖

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULES OF CLASSES ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR ENROLLMENT IN SATERN:

IAM AND PP&E DSPL TRAINING

OCTOBER 21-25, 2013*

8:00 A.M. – 4:30P.M.

4200, G13A (SELF-STUDY LEARNING CENTER)

THE POC TO CONFIRM THE TIME AND LOCATION, TO ANSWER QUESTIONS REGARDING THE TRAINING, OR FOR HOSTING TRAINING AT YOUR CENTER IS: EDWARD A. AHMAD, MSFC (256) 544-7964, OR PAT HILL, MSFC (256) 544-4501.

* Tentative

Contact Us:

Your involvement, understanding, and feedback are essential to make the Equipment Management Program a success. Please send us your questions/comments by calling or emailing:

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More information on Equipment Management at:

<http://UId.hq.nasa.gov/equipmgt.html>