

October 13, 1998

TO: Distribution

FROM: W/Inspector General

SUBJECT: Use of Multicolor Offset Printing, Color Copiers, and Color Printers

This memorandum follows up my remarks made at the October 5, 1998, Senior Staff and Center Directors' Meeting regarding the subject topic. The NASA Office of Inspector General (OIG) has noted increased use of multicolor offset printing, color copiers, and color printers in NASA contrary to Agency criteria. We also have indications that offices and employees are using color copiers and color printers for other than mission-related activities and/or using this equipment when black and white reproduction would suffice. The use of multicolor printing, color copiers, and color printers significantly increases the costs of published products.

NASA Procedures and Guidelines for Printing, Duplicating, and Copying Management, NPG 1490.5A, provides information and standards which apply to NASA Headquarters and all NASA Centers. The NPG clearly states that offset printing in two or more colors is prohibited for work in which additional colors provide no demonstrable value.<sup>1</sup> In all instances in which two or more colors are desired, it is the responsibility of the Installation Printing Management Officer (IPMO) to make a final determination as to whether additional colors provide a demonstrable value as required by public law.<sup>2</sup> At NASA Headquarters, requests to the IPMO for four-color printing must be signed by an Associate Administrator or Deputy Associate Administrator acknowledging that the signer

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<sup>1</sup> Multicolor printing that does not meet the demonstrably valuable contribution requirement includes, for example, printed items for which additional color is used primarily for decorative effect; printed items for which additional color is used primarily in lieu of effective layout and design; and printed items for which additional color is used excessively. (*NPG 1490.5A, Chapter 3, Section 3.9.3*)

<sup>2</sup> Demonstrably valuable multicolor printing includes several categories including, for example, maps and technical diagrams for which additional color is necessary for clarity; object identification (medical specimens, diseases, plants, flags, uniforms); and printing for programs required by law whose relative success or failure is in direct ratio to the degree of public response and where that response can be logically attributable to the number of colors planned and the manner in which they are proposed to be used. (*NPG 1490.5A, Chapter 3, Section 3.9.2*)

believes it to be in NASA's best interest to incur the additional costs. Some NASA Centers have similar approval processes in effect.

Despite these requirements, NASA managers have increased their requests for the use of multicolor offset printing. These requests have significantly increased the costs of printing within NASA. We evaluated two publications with limited public interest where the use of color appeared to be purely decorative. In example one, 700 copies of a 1996 publication were produced in black and white at a cost of about \$2,000 (\$2.86 per copy or 3.5 cents per page). In 1997, 1,000 copies of a slightly larger version of the publication were produced using four-color printing at a cost of about \$21,000 (\$21.00 per copy or 22 cents per page). In example two, 60 copies of a 1996 publication were produced in black and white at a cost of \$175.50 (\$2.93 per copy or 8 cents per page). In 1997, 120 copies of a slightly larger version of the publication were produced using four-colors at a cost of about \$2,000 (\$17.18 per copy or 37 cents per page). In our opinion, there was little demonstrable value added by using multicolor printing for these publications.

We also note an increase in the use of color printers and copiers. In some cases, this equipment is used for non-mission related purposes. For example, some offices are using color printers or copiers to produce flyers for retirement parties and other functions. Color printing and copying is far more expensive than black and white printing and copying, and should therefore be used in instances where NASA's missions are properly served.

In an era of fiscal constraint and constant public, media and Congressional scrutiny, it is important that NASA managers avoid unnecessary expenditures of public funds for color printing, color copying and color printer use. Managers need to ensure that requests for multicolor printing, color copying and the use of color printers are only made when the use of multiple colors adds demonstrable value, not just cosmetic appeal, to the product.

Our concerns are applicable throughout NASA. The cost effectiveness of NASA's printing, duplicating, and copying depends in large part on how well the established procedures are carried out. NASA managers need to constantly consider the cost impact of decisions they make regarding their color printing and copy needs.

If you have questions regarding these issues, please consult your local IPMO, or contact Mr. David Cushing at (202) 358-2572 or Ms. Ywanda Gamble at (202) 358-0629 of the NASA OIG Office of Inspections, Administrative Investigations, and Assessments.

***Original Signed by the Inspector General***

Roberta L. Gross

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