

PUBLIC NOTICE
DEPARTMENT OF AIR FORCE USE OF NATIONAL AERONAUTICS SPACE
ADMINISTRATION (NASA) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR Air Force Research
Laboratory (AFRL) Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) at Area 1-42
Edwards Air Force Base, CA.

Effective immediately as published in the Federal Register Volume 89, No. 227 on November 25, 2024, the Department of the Air Force (DAF) adopted 35 Categorical Exclusions (CATEXs) established by other federal agencies to be used for DAF proposed actions. The DAF has consulted with these federal agencies and obtained their concurrence on DAF use of these CATEXs. The use of another agency's CATEX requires the DAF to evaluate the proposed action for extraordinary circumstances pursuant to both agencies' regulations. If the DAF conducts analyses of the proposed actions and determines no extraordinary circumstances are present, or if an extraordinary circumstance exists and the proposed action does not have the potential to result in significant effects, the DAF may apply the CATEX without preparing an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement.

An environmental impact analysis (EIAP) was completed and signed on April 17, 2025, for Air Force (AF) Form 813 Report Control Symbol No. 25-0012, *Work Unit Q2SW - Flight Works, Inc. Thruster Pod Test: Area 1-42, E-Cell*. This analysis, documented on an AF Form 813, complies with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (as amended by the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023), DAF EIAP (32 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 989), and Executive Order 14514, Unleashing American Energy.

The DAF has adopted NASA's CATEX 14 CFR 1216.304(d)(3)(i), Research, development, and testing in compliance with all applicable Federal, federally recognized Indian tribe, State, and/or local law or requirements and Executive orders. After confirming no extraordinary circumstances exist per DAF (Appendix B to 32 CFR Part 989) and NASA (14 CFR 1216.304(c)) regulations, Edwards AFB determined this CATEX applies because:

- The testing occurs within an existing research, development, testing, and evaluation (RDT&E) AF facility and won't alter the designated land use of Area 1-42
- The project test operations investigate the test unit stability and sensitivity

National Aeronautics & Space Administration
14 CFR § 1216.304 - Categorical Exclusions
Link: https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-14/chapter-V/part-1216/subpart-1216.3/section-1216.304
NASA-(d)(2)(i): Routine maintenance, minor construction or rehabilitation, minor demolition, minor modification, minor repair, and continuing or altered operations at, or of, existing NASA or NASA-funded or -approved facilities and equipment, such as buildings, roads, grounds, utilities, communication systems, and ground support systems (e.g., space tracking and data systems). This includes routine operations such as security, public health and safety, and environmental services.
NASA-(d)(3)(i): Research, development, testing, and evaluation in compliance with all applicable Federal, state, Tribal, or local laws or requirements and Executive Orders. This includes the research, development, testing, and evaluation of scientific instruments proposed for use on spacecraft, aircraft (including unmanned aircraft systems), sounding rockets, balloons, laboratories, watercraft, or other outdoor activities.
NASA-(d)(3)(iii): Use of lasers for research and development, scientific instruments and measurements, and distance and ranging, where such use meets all applicable Federal, state, Tribal,

or local laws or requirements and Executive orders. This includes lasers associated with spacecraft, aircraft (including unmanned aircraft systems), sounding rockets, balloons, laboratories, watercraft, or other outdoor activities.

Table 1: National Aeronautics & Space Administration (NASA) CATEX List

This posting will be publicly available on the Edwards AFB website for 30 days. Inquiries can be directed to 412 CEG/CEVA Environmental Planning at 412TW.CEV.EIAP@us.af.mil.