REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

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1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)*
11-05-2021

2. REPORT TYPE
Briefing Slides

3. DATES COVERED *(From - To)*
18 May 2021 – 1 June 2021

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
Simplifying Safety in a Complex Environment – Building Organizational Accountability Whilst Maintaining Standardization

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER

5b. GRANT NUMBER

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

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5d. PROJECT NUMBER

5e. TASK NUMBER

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) AND ADDRESS(ES)
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8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
412TW-PA-21245

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
412th Test Wing
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10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
N/A

11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release Distribution Statement A: distribution is unlimited.

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
Source Code 012100 (This number comes from STINFO via EAFB Technical Library)
CA: 412th Test Wing, Edwards AFB, CA

14. ABSTRACT

In an organization as diverse as the 412th test wing, where over 10 platforms are being tested across several individual organizations, accountability to the functional goals of flight test safety becomes absolutely crucial to the implementation and success of safety planning and execution. In an attempt to cultivate accountability, the 412th test wing has removed the supplemental local policy governing flight test safety planning with the goal of giving ownership back to each individual organization. Multiple other facets of the safety process are also under review for change. The catalyst for these changes is the Department of Defense-mandated departmental shift in mindset, culture, and management to be more agile and responsive in today's fast-paced development environment. These changes may have the unintended consequence of removing built-in barriers within the mishap chain. For this model to work and continue to prevent mishaps, competence, knowledge, and workforce skill in creating and documenting the safety plan, as well as enhanced test safety communication, are compensatory prerequisites. 412th TW test safety is working to find a functional middle ground that allows organizations to take ownership for their own test safety documentation and processes, whilst still upholding the integrity of the efficient process that is independent review in the 412th test safety system. The existing process has been honed over decades of hard-fought lessons, some of them written in blood, and letting this standard slip would undermine the safety of Edwards' flight test community. The 'right' answer will be a balance between independent organizational accountability and standardization that allows for efficient, responsive review of documentation across these different organizations. Through the upholding of well thought-through standard practices, competent flight test professionals will be naturally cultivated and the goals of increased responsiveness and ownership will be achieved. This presentation shares our 412th TW test safety changes and their corresponding compensatory mechanisms.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
USAF TPS, Stanford GPS Lab, ARAIM, DPA, GNSS, Flight Test, C-12J

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			**17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT**	**18. NUMBER OF PAGES**	**19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON**
		Unclassified			412 TENG/EN (Tech Pubs)
a. REPORT	**b. ABSTRACT**	**c. THIS PAGE**	None	20	**19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER** *(include area code)*
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified			661-277-8615

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18