PLANETARY PROTECTION ISSUES FOR MARS SAMPLE ACQUISITION FLIGHT PROJECTS

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The planned NASA sample acquisition flight missions to Mars pose several interesting planetary protection issues. In addition to the usual forward contamination procedures for the adequate protection of Mars for the sake of future missions, there are reasons to ensure that the sample is not contaminated by terrestrial microbes from the acquisition mission. Recent recommendations by the Space Studies Board, National Research Council, would indicate that the scientific integrity of the sample is a planetary protection concern. Also, as a practical matter, a contaminated sample would interfere with the process for its release from quarantine after return for distribution to the interested scientists. These matters will be discussed in terms of the first planned acquisition mission.

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F3.4 Evolving planetary Protection Policy for Extraterrestrial Sample Return
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no special equipment required
Oral preferred
no financial support requested