

NASA Supports Train–Derailment Recovery in Alabama

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NASA SUPPORTS TRAIN–DERAILMENT RECOVERY IN ALABAMA

WASHINGTON – Officials from NASA and ATK Launch Systems, Edina, Minn., are assisting the Federal Railroad Administration during its investigation of a train derailment Wednesday morning near Pennington, Ala. The train was carrying space shuttle reusable solid rocket motor segments from the ATK Launch Systems manufacturing site in Brigham City, Utah, to NASA's Kennedy Space Center, Fla.

"Several members of the NASA family were injured in this serious accident. Today our prayers are for those who have been injured and their families. Our employees work in hazardous jobs every day, and it is our goal to keep them safe," said NASA's Space Shuttle Program Manager Wayne Hale.

The special train carrying only solid rocket motor segments and a passenger car to monitor their transportation was crossing a bridge or a trestle, which collapsed under the locomotives. Six people were injured when the two locomotives and the passenger car dropped about 10 feet and turned on their sides.

One of the cars carrying a solid rocket motor segment is also on its side. The remaining cars containing seven solid rocket motor segments and two aft exit cone segments are upright.

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The hardware was intended for use on shuttle Discovery's STS-120 mission in October and shuttle Atlantis's STS-122 mission in December. These segments are interchangeable, and ATK Launch Systems has replacement units that could be used for the shuttle flights, if necessary.

Each segment weighs approximately 300,000 lbs. and is protected by a white or yellow colored fiberglass cover during shipment. The condition of the rocket motor segments will be assessed as soon as teams conduct a full inspection. Solid Rocket Motor segments have been transported across country by rail for more than 26 years with an excellent record of safe transportation. For information about the Space Shuttle Program, visit:

www.nasa.gov/shuttle

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