DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

Results of FAA Nitrous Oxide BLEVE Characterization Testing

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Public Teleconference.

SUMMARY: This notice announces a public teleconference to share with the public results of recent FAA sponsored testing of nitrous oxide (N₂O) characteristics. Nitrous oxide is an important oxidizer to developers of some commercial reusable launch vehicles. A potential hazard in nitrous oxide storage and handling is a Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapor Explosion (BLEVE), which results from a sudden loss of pressure in a tank containing nitrous oxide stored under pressure above its normal boiling point. The FAA’s Office of Commercial Space Transportation sponsored tests of liquid-phase nitrous oxide at NASA’s White Sands Test Facility to empirically determine the superheat limit temperature for nitrous oxide, and to demonstrate that a BLEVE would not occur if the liquid is maintained at temperatures below this superheat limit temperature.

MEETING INFORMATION: The teleconference is scheduled for Thursday, February 28, 2013, from 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. The presentation and call-in number will be posted one week in advance at http://www.ast.faa.gov/.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stewart Jackson, Division Manager, Regulations and Analysis Division, AST-300, Office of Commercial Space Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC  20591, Telephone (202) 267-7903, or e-mail at stewart.jackson@faa.gov.
Issued in Washington, DC on January 22, 2013.

George C. Nield

Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation

[FR Doc. 2013-02046 Filed 01/29/2013 at 8:45 am; Publication Date: 01/30/2013]