

# The ethics behind the challenger explosion 9190



The explosion of the Challenger spacecraft is the greatest tragedy in the history of NASA. It is also one of the most heated engineering ethical debates available for analysis. The question of whether or not the astronauts had the proper information to consent the launch is one of the main aspects of the debate.

When looking at this case, it is obvious that whether or not there was informed consent by the astronauts plays a very large role because they are the individuals that ultimately paid the price with their lives. Whether or not the astronauts received the proper data would decide if there is anything that can be deemed criminal about the case. If the astronauts were not given the proper information by their management before they consented, then a case can be made that the management is responsible for the astronaut s deaths. If they had all of the information available, weighed their options, and decided to go ahead with the launch, then the responsibility falls on the astronauts themselves. The idea of whether or not proper informed consent occurred is the sole main issue of the entire case.

Given the information presented in the reading, it does not seem likely that the astronauts had all of the information available when making the decision to go ahead with the launch. In a space launch process, the engineers play a key role and know the individual parts of the spacecraft better than anyone. The head engineers at Thiokol made a recommendation to NASA to delay the launch based on the data, or lack there of, concerning the stability of the O-ring at such cold temperatures. If the astronauts had this information, from the head engineers, it is hard to believe that they would have given their

own consent to the launch. The idea that NASA management circumvented the astronauts and made the decision themselves is the more likely scenario.