

Estimates of Radiation Exposures to Crews on Missions in Cis-Lunar Space from the October 1989 Series of Solar Particle Events

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In its 2008 report, the National Research Council recommended against the use of the King spectrum August 1972 solar energetic particle event as the design standard. It was stated in the Council report that radiation exposures from other events in the historical record could exceed those from the 1972 event. Instead, the Council recommended that other events, such as the October 1989 event, be used in place of the 1972 event. In this work we present estimates of radiation exposures to male and female crew members in cis-lunar space from the summed spectrum of the October 1989 series of events and from the August 1972 King spectrum. These estimates are obtained for both aluminum and polyethylene shields, and compared to NASA short-term exposure limits.

Nomenclature

γ_1, γ_2	=	spectral indices, unitless
<i>BFO</i>	=	blood forming organ\
<i>CAF</i>	=	Computerized Anatomical Female
<i>CAM</i>	=	Computerized Anatomical Man
<i>CNS</i>	=	central nervous system
<i>D</i>	=	absorbed dose
<i>MeV</i>	=	mega electron volt(s)
<i>NASA</i>	=	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
<i>OLTARIS</i>	=	Online Tool for the Assessment of Radiation Effects in Space
<i>R</i>	=	proton rigidity (momentum per unit charge), megavolts
<i>R₀</i>	=	characteristic rigidity, megavolts
<i>RBE</i>	=	Relative Biological Effectiveness
<i>REID</i>	=	risk of exposure induced death
<i>SPE</i>	=	solar particle event

I. Introduction

THE radiation environment in cis-lunar space presents hazards to spacefaring crews from two main sources: the ever-present galactic cosmic ray environment and sporadic solar particle events. Historically, NASA has used the King spectrum representation of the incident proton spectrum as its design basis event¹. Although this event has one of the largest proton fluences, its energy spectrum is fairly soft (decreases rapidly with increasing proton energy). As a result, the event presents a radiation hazard to crews in spacesuits or thinly-shielded spacecraft, but is relatively easy to shield with moderate levels of shielding.^{2,3} Initial studies of the October 1989 events^{2,3} used preliminary spectra obtained from an unnumbered, unpublished NOAA SEC report. The doses and dose equivalents estimated for the 1989 events were comparable to the August 1972 values. These analyses, however, used an exponential in rigidity (momentum per unit charge) spectrum representation for the events that incorrectly extrapolated them to proton energies above 100 MeV. In 2010, Atwell and collaborators published dose estimates for both the 1972 and 1989 events utilizing a Band function fit, which properly represents the high energy (> 100 MeV) proton spectrum⁴. As a result, the October 1989 event exposures were larger than those from the August 1972 event since its spectrum

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was harder at high energies than the 1972 event. However, the Band function parameters were not published in archival literature, but were made available to the research communication by private communication from Tylka.

In a 2008 report, the National Research Council recommended that NASA discontinue use of the August 1972 King spectrum as its design standard since exposures from that event could be exceeded by exposures from more recent events for exploration-type missions. Instead, the recommendation was made to consider the October 1989 series of events as an alternative⁵. More recently, a group of experts at an SPE Technical Interchange Meeting at NASA Langley formally recommended that NASA adopt the summed spectrum from the October 19-24, 1989, series of events as the design standard spectrum for use in estimating radiation protection requirements for future cis-lunar missions⁶. That paper, for the first time, published the Band function fits for the October 1989 series of events in the open, archival literature. In this work, we utilize these published spectra to re-examine the expected exposures to both male and female crew members from the October 1989 event series and compare them to the expected exposures from the August 1972 King spectrum behind both aluminum and polyethylene shielding.

II. Computational Methods

We assume that crewmembers (male and female) are located within a spherical, spacecraft shell shielding having areal densities ranging from 0.1 to 20 g cm⁻². Shield compositions are assumed to be either aluminum or polyethylene. The incident radiation spectrum is assumed to be either the King spectrum representation of the August 1972 SPE⁷, or the summed spectrum for the October 19-24, 1989 SPEs⁶, as originally modeled by Tylka using the Band function parameterization. The August 1972 proton spectrum, as presented in Ref. 7, is given by

$$J(> E) = J_0 \exp\left[\frac{(30 - E)}{26.5}\right] \quad (1)$$

where J is the proton integral fluence (cm⁻²) with energies greater than E, J₀ = 7.9×10⁹cm⁻², and E is proton energy in MeV. The October 1989 events are given by

$$\begin{aligned} J(> R) &= J_0 R^{-\gamma_1} \exp(-R/R_0); \text{ for } R \leq (\gamma_2 - \gamma_1)R_0 \\ J(> R) &= J_0 R^{-\gamma_2} \left\{ [(\gamma_2 - \gamma_1)R_0]^{(\gamma_2 - \gamma_1)} \exp(\gamma_2 - \gamma_1) \right\}; \text{ for } R \geq (\gamma_2 - \gamma_1)R_0 \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

Where R is the proton rigidity (momentum per unit charge), J is the proton integral fluence with rigidities greater than R, and (J₀, R₀, γ₁, γ₂) are parameters whose values are displayed in Table 1 for the series of October events.

Table 1. October 1989 event spectrum parameters

Event Date	J ₀ (cm ⁻²)	R ₀ (MV)	γ ₁	γ ₂
10/19a/2018	1.22×10 ⁹	162.1	0.528	5.81
10/19b/2018	9.09×10 ⁹	84.35	0.911	4.43
10/22/2018	1.09×10 ⁹	135.2	1.226	7.25
10/24/2018	4.42×10 ⁷	385.0	2.176	5.65

These spectra are transported through the spherical space craft shielding and then through the human body, using the OLTARIS website at NASA Langley Research Center (<https://oltaris.nasa.gov>), to estimate effective doses and organ doses for the male and female crew members. The human geometry models used in the calculations are the Computerized Anatomical Male (CAM)⁸ and Computerized Anatomical Female (CAF)⁹ models. It is assumed that the space craft is located in cis-lunar space outside Earth's geomagnetic field. The NASA permissible

radiation exposure limits¹⁰ for critical body organs are shown in Table 2. For the eye lens, skin and blood forming organs (BFO), the units are in centigray-equivalent (cGy-Eq), which is calculated by multiplying the absorbed dose, D(cGy), by a unitless relative biological effectiveness (RBE) factor to account for differences in biological damage effectiveness for protons over gammas and x-rays (reference radiations). For protons¹¹, RBE = 1.5. For the heart and central nervous system (brain), the RBE is unknown, so the limits are expressed directly in absorbed dose (cGy). Aside from the limits in Table 2, which are to prevent short-term and noncancer effects, there are also career effective dose limits, which are imposed to reduce the possibility of space radiation exposures to astronauts resulting in a fatal cancer. These are specific to the mission duration and the radiation environment the astronaut is expected to be exposed to. They are obtained by applying the criteria that the risk of exposure induced death (REID) is limited to 3% at the 95% confidence limit. Table 3 presents representative effective dose limits for exposures

Table 2. NASA Permissible Exposure Limits for Critical Organs

Organ	30 Day	1 Year (cGy-Eq)	Career (cGy-Eq)
Lens	100 cGy-Eq	200 cGy-Eq	400 cGy-Eq
Skin	150 cGy-Eq	300 cGy-Eq	600 cGy-Eq
BFO	25 cGy-Eq	50 cGy-Eq	N/A
Heart	25 cGy	50 cGy	100 cGy
CNS	50 cGy	100 cGy	150 cGy

Table 3. NASA Career Permissible Exposure Limits for Solar Particle Events for a One Year Mission

Age (years)	Effective Dose (cSv)	
	Female	Male
30	17.4	23.0
35	20.4	26.7
40	23.0	29.6
45	27.8	35.2
50	34.1	42.0

to SPEs during a one year mission. Note that they are both¹² age and sex-dependent.

III. Results

The computational results obtained from the OLTARIS website for the 1972 and 1989 events are presented in Tables 4 through 7 for female crew members and in Tables 8 through 11 for males.

A. Female Crew Exposures

Table 4. Organ dose and effective dose for female crew members for the summed October 1989 event spectrum shielded by aluminum. Values exceeding 30d short-term organ limits and career effective dose limits for 30y old females are in bold type.

Al Shield (g cm ⁻²)	Skin Dose (cGy-Eq.)	Eye Dose (cGy-Eq.)	BFO Dose (cGy-Eq.)	CNS Dose (cGy)	Heart Dose (cGy)	Effective Dose (cSv)
0.1	13640	1180	150	72	61	553
0.4	3719	874	136	68	59	229
1	1346	562	114	62	55	144
5	176	142	57	38	38	59
10	71	66	34	24	26	37
20	28	28	18	22	16	23

In Table 4 note that all of the dose limits for females are exceeded for the thinnest shields (0.1 and 0.4 g cm⁻²). For 1 g cm⁻² shielding all organ limits are exceeded. Behind 5 g cm⁻² only the brain (CNS) and effective dose values are below limits. Behind 10 g cm⁻² both the BFO and heart doses exceed limits. All organ dose values are below all limits behind 20 g cm⁻² Al shielding. In all cases shown, the effective dose limits are exceeded. Finally, if aluminum

is the shield material, a storm shelter on the order of 20 g cm^{-2} appears adequate to protect against short-term effects. However, the career effective dose limits will be exceeded for those female crew members under 40y of age.

Table 5. Organ dose and effective dose for female crew members for the August 1972 event spectrum shielded by aluminum. Values exceeding 30d short-term organ limits and career effective dose limits for 30y old females are in bold type.

Al Shield (g cm^{-2})	Skin Dose (cGy-Eq.)	Eye Dose (cGy-Eq.)	BFO Dose (cGy-Eq.)	CNS Dose (cGy)	Heart Dose (cGy)	Effective Dose (cSv)
0.1	5940	1844	290	120	75	428
0.4	3696	1606	260	111	71	338
1	2169	1164	213	96	63	252
5	376	279	74	41	30	81
10	103	84	28	16	15	35
20	18	17	8	4	6	15

Table 5 presents results for female crew members shielded by aluminum from the August 1972 event. Note that all of the organ dose limits for females are exceeded for the thin shields (0.1 , 0.4 , and 1 g cm^{-2}). Behind 5 g cm^{-2} only the brain (CNS) dose is below limits. Behind 10 g cm^{-2} only the BFO dose exceeds limits. All organ dose values are below all limits behind 20 g cm^{-2} Al shielding. In all cases shown, the effective dose limits are exceeded except for the thick, 20 g cm^{-2} shield. Thus, if aluminum is the shield material, a storm shelter on the order of 20 g cm^{-2} appears adequate to provide crew exposure protection. Comparing the organ dose and effective dose results in Tables 4 and 5 for the two events, it is clear that the organ doses are generally higher for the August 1972 event than for the October 1989 event series, except for the thicker shields, where the doses from the October 1989 series are more than 50% higher.

Table 6. Organ dose and effective dose for female crew members for the summed October 1989 event spectrum shielded by polyethylene (PE). Values exceeding 30d short-term organ limits and career effective dose limits for 30y old females are in bold type.

PE Shield (g cm^{-2})	Skin Dose (cGy-Eq.)	Eye Dose (cGy-Eq.)	BFO Dose (cGy-Eq.)	CNS Dose (cGy)	Heart Dose (cGy)	Effective Dose (cSv)
0.1	9656	1126	148	71	61	412
0.4	2454	761	129	67	58	188
1	868	446	104	59	53	119
5	113	99	46	32	33	46
10	45	44	25.5	18	21	27
20	17	17	12	8	11	14

Table 6 presents results for female crew members shielded by polyethylene from the summed October 1989 series of events. Overall, we note that polyethylene reduces organ dose and effective doses, compared to aluminum, by more than 20% for all shield thicknesses. Again we note that all limits are exceeded for shields 1 g cm^{-2} and thinner. For shields 5 g cm^{-2} thick, only BFO dose, Heart dose and effective dose exceed limits. Behind 10 g cm^{-2} shielding, the effective dose limit is exceeded and the BFO limit is barely exceeded. All organ dose and effective dose values are below limits for a 20 g cm^{-2} polyethylene shield.

Table 7 presents results for female crew members shielded by polyethylene from the August 1972 event. Note that all of the organ dose limits for females are exceeded for the thin shields (0.1 , 0.4 , and 1 g cm^{-2}). Behind 5 g cm^{-2} the brain (CNS) and Heart doses are below limits. Behind 10 g cm^{-2} all of the organ doses are below limits. All

organ dose values are below all limits behind 20 g cm⁻² Al shielding. In all cases shown, the effective dose limits are exceeded except for the thick, 20 g cm⁻² shield. Thus, if polyethylene is the shield material, a storm shelter on the order of 20 g cm⁻² appears adequate to provide crew exposure protection. Comparing the organ dose and effective dose results in Tables 6 and 7 for the two events, it is clear that the organ doses are generally higher for the August 1972 event than for the October 1989 event series, except for the thicker shields, where the doses from the October 1989 series are lower.

Table 7. Organ dose and effective dose for female crew members for the August 1972 event spectrum shielded by aluminum. Values exceeding 30d short-term organ limits and career effective dose limits for 30y old females are in bold type.

Al Shield (g cm ⁻²)	Skin Dose (cGy-Eq.)	Eye Dose (cGy-Eq.)	BFO Dose (cGy-Eq.)	CNS Dose (cGy)	Heart Dose (cGy)	Effective Dose (cSv)
0.1	5314	1890	286	119	75	406
0.4	3023	1460	247	107	69	306
1	1625	964	188	88	58	213
5	212	168	49	28	22	53
10	46	40	15	9	9	19
20	6	6	4	2	3	7

B. Male Crew Exposures

Table 8. Organ dose and effective dose for male crew members for the summed October 1989 event spectrum shielded by aluminum. Values exceeding 30d short-term organ limits and career effective dose limits for 30y old males are in bold type.

Al Shield (g cm ⁻²)	Skin Dose (cGy-Eq.)	Eye Dose (cGy-Eq.)	BFO Dose (cGy-Eq.)	CNS Dose (cGy)	Heart Dose (cGy)	Effective Dose (cSv)
0.1	13780	1159	136	73	58	600
0.4	3775	856	123	60	56	267
1	1369	550	105	55	53	171
5	177	139	54	35	36	64
10	71	64	33	22	25	39
20	28	28	18	12	15	23

In Table 8 note that all of the dose limits for males are exceeded for the thinnest shields (at or below 1g cm⁻²). Behind 5 g cm⁻² only the brain (CNS) is below the limit. Behind 10 g cm⁻² the BFO exceeds the limit and the heart dose is at the limit. All organ dose values are below all limits behind 20 g cm⁻² Al shielding. In all cases shown, the effective dose limits are exceeded above 30y of age, except that the limit is not exceeded for males 50y of age.. For 30y old males, the effective dose is at the limit. Finally, if aluminum is the shield material, a storm shelter on the order of 20 g cm⁻² appears adequate to protect against short-term effects.

Table 9 presents results for male crew members shielded by aluminum from the August 1972 event. Note that all of the organ dose limits for males are exceeded for the thin shields (0.1, 0.4, and 1 g cm⁻²). Behind 5 g cm⁻² only the brain (CNS) dose is below limits. Behind 10 g cm⁻² only the BFO dose exceeds limits. All organ dose values are below all limits behind 20 g cm⁻² Al shielding. In all cases shown, the effective dose limits are exceeded except for the thick, 20 g cm⁻² shield. Thus, if aluminum is the shield material, a storm shelter on the order of 20 g cm⁻² appears adequate to provide crew exposure protection. Comparing the organ dose and effective dose results in Tables 8 and 9 for the two events, it is clear that the organ doses are generally higher for the August 1972 event than for the October 1989 event series, except for the thicker shields, where the doses from the October 1989 series are more than 50% higher.

Table 9. Organ dose and effective dose for male crew members for the August 1972 event spectrum shielded by aluminum. Values exceeding 30d short-term organ limits and career effective dose limits for 30y old males are in bold type.

Al Shield (g cm ⁻²)	Skin Dose (cGy-Eq.)	Eye Dose (cGy-Eq.)	BFO Dose (cGy-Eq.)	CNS Dose (cGy)	Heart Dose (cGy)	Effective Dose (cSv)
0.1	6037	1901	260	99	71	535
0.4	3761	1569	234	92	67	420
1	2208	1136	192	80	59	320
5	384	273	68	35	29	96
10	104	82	26	14	14	39
20	18	17	8	4	6	16

Table 10. Organ dose and effective dose for male crew members for the summed October 1989 event spectrum shielded by polyethylene (PE). Values exceeding 30d short-term organ limits and career effective dose limits for 30y old females are in bold type.

PE Shield (g cm ⁻²)	Skin Dose (cGy-Eq.)	Eye Dose (cGy-Eq.)	BFO Dose (cGy-Eq.)	CNS Dose (cGy)	Heart Dose (cGy)	Effective Dose (cSv)
0.1	9769	1105	134	63	58	456
0.4	2494	745	118	59	55	223
1	882	436	96	53	51	143
5	114	97	43	29	31	49
10	46	43	24	17	20	27
20	17	17	12	8	10	14

Table 10 presents results for male crew members shielded by polyethylene from the summed October 1989 series of events. Overall, we note that polyethylene reduces organ dose and effective doses, compared to aluminum, by more than 20% for all shield thicknesses. Again we note that all limits are exceeded for shields 1 g cm⁻² and thinner. For shields 5 g cm⁻² thick, only BFO dose, Heart dose and effective dose exceed limits. Behind 10 g cm⁻² shielding, only the effective dose limit is exceeded. All organ dose and effective dose values are below limits for a 20 g cm⁻² polyethylene shield.

Table 11. Organ dose and effective dose for male crew members for the August 1972 event spectrum shielded by polyethylene (PE). Values exceeding 30d short-term organ limits and career effective dose limits for 30y old males are in bold type.

PE Shield (g cm ⁻²)	Skin Dose (cGy-Eq.)	Eye Dose (cGy-Eq.)	BFO Dose (cGy-Eq.)	CNS Dose (cGy)	Heart Dose (cGy)	Effective Dose (cSv)
0.1	5403	1890	286	119	75	511
0.4	3078	1460	247	107	69	391
1	1653	964	188	88	58	271
5	215	168	49	28	22	61
10	46	40	15	9	9	20
20	6	6	4	2	3	7

Table 11 presents results for male crew members shielded by polyethylene from the August 1972 event. Overall, we note that polyethylene reduces organ dose and effective doses, compared to aluminum, by more than 20% for all shield thicknesses. Again we note that all limits are exceeded for shields 1 g cm^{-2} and thinner. For shields 5 g cm^{-2} thick, skin, eye, BFO, and effective dose exceed limits. For 10 g cm^{-2} shielding and greater, all organ dose and effective dose values are below limits.

IV. Conclusions

Estimates of critical organ dose and effective doses for male and female crew members in cis-lunar space shielded by aluminum and polyethylene shielding, ranging from 0.1 g cm^{-2} to 20 g cm^{-2} in areal density, were made for exposures for the current NASA design standard solarparticle event (August 1972), and a recently-proposed revised standard using the summed spectra for the solar particle events of October 19, 22, and 24. Comparing the organ doses for the two standards, the organ doses and effective doses were generally larger for the August 1972 event for thinner shields ($\sim 5 \text{ g cm}^{-2}$) of both materials, and larger for the October 1989 series for shields $\sim 20 \text{ g cm}^{-2}$ thickness. Thus, for exploration missions, the use of the 1972 event as a standard is likely to underestimate doses for events with hard energy spectra, similar to those in the October 1989 series, especially if there are severe constraints on the mass of spacecraft structure and shielding. As expected, organ doses were generally lower for males than for females due to the larger body mass for males. However, these differences became negligible for internal organs inside spacecraft with shielding thicknesses $\sim 20 \text{ g cm}^{-2}$. We also note that organ doses, except for skin, are lower for polyethylene shielding than aluminum due to its lower atomic mass constituents and hydrogen content. Finally, even for thicker shields, effective doses from an SPE can sometimes exceed NASA guidelines when critical organ doses are below the short-term limits.

Acknowledgments

Useful information exchanges with Chris Sandridge at NASA Langley Research Center concerning uploading shielding files to the OLTARIS website are gratefully acknowledged.

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