



The need for revising planetary protection guidelines for missions to Mars

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Planetary protection guidelines as they are today are mostly based on experience and research conducted during the Viking area. Although some of the policies have been updated to make them more user-friendly, the practical aspects like the microbial reduction and verification procedures remained unchanged. The increased knowledge gained in the field of microbiology, the technical development on microbial detection methods, and a re-assessment of the microbial contamination in spacecraft assembly, testing, and launch facilities make it necessary to update current planetary protection guidelines.

This paper will suggest changes in the current planetary protection guidelines based on recent workshops and working group meetings.