

Chapter 3

Space Junk



Terms and Definitions

AEROSPACE: Pertaining to the Earth's atmosphere and outer space.

ALLIANCE: A close association in order to achieve a desired goal or set of objectives.

ALLY: A country, group, or individual who joins with others to achieve a common purpose.

ASTRONAUT: A carefully trained individual who participates in spacecraft flights.

BOOSTER: The primary stage of a multistage rocket that enables successful launch and liftoff.

CELESTIAL: Pertaining to the sky or the heavens.

COMBAT: To contend with or fight against.

COSMONAUT: A Russian astronaut.

DEBRIS: Carelessly discarded waste.

DETECTION: The act or process of identifying or discovering something.

DETERRENT: Something that discourages or prevents another from doing something that is undesired.

DING: A small dent.

DISCARD: To throw away.

DISINTEGRATE: To break up into fragments or particles.

DUMP: A storage place for refuse.

ENFORCEMENT: The act of compelling compliance with a law, regulation, policy, or guideline.

ENVIRONMENT: The Earth's surroundings and resources which enable living things to develop and prosper.

FIREBALL: An unusually bright meteor.

GEOLOGIST: A scientist who studies the Earth.

INSURANCE: An agreement by which an individual or company pays a certain amount of money periodically in agreed-upon amounts in exchange for knowing that larger sums of money will be provided in the event that specific negative conditions are encountered and restorative services are required.

INTERVENTION: To interfere in order to alter a specific action.

JUNKYARD: A place where junk, remains, or leftover parts are stored.

KESSLER SYNDROME: The point at which the Earth's low orbit will become so packed with space junk that collisions will make space unusable.

LAW: An official rule of conduct established and enforced by a government or other authoritative body.

METEORITE: A small mass of matter that falls to the Earth's surface from space.

MITIGATION: The process of reducing the intensity or severity of something.

NASA: The abbreviation for the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

NEGLECT: To disregard or pay inadequate attention to.

NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND (NORAD): The Colorado-based organization that tracks space junk as well as satellites.

ORBIT: To revolve around something.

OUTER SPACE: The region of space located just beyond the Earth's atmosphere.

POLLUTION: A harmful form of impurity or contamination.

REGULATION: A rule or law that governs conduct.

RESTORATION: The act of returning something to its previous state or condition.

SATELLITE: An object that is launched intentionally to orbit the Earth or some other celestial body.

SCIENTIST: An individual who possesses knowledge and research expertise in one or more of the sciences.

SPACE DEBRIS: Manmade and naturally occurring debris that is orbiting the Earth.

SPACE JUNK: Manmade debris that is orbiting the Earth.

SPACE STATION: A large satellite, typically designed to carry out scientific research, that can support a crew of humans as it orbits the Earth.

SPACEFARING: Involved in space exploration.

U.S. SPACE SURVEILLANCE NETWORK: A system of advanced military radars, located at nearly two dozen sites around the world, that track space junk.

