Jeff Thornburg
Senior Director, Propulsion Engineering

Jeff Thornburg is Senior Director of Propulsion Engineering at SpaceX in Hawthorne, CA and serves as the lead engineer and manager of methane engine systems including the Raptor engine development program. Jeff is responsible for the development of the propulsion hardware and facilities to lead SpaceX into the next generation of vehicles and propulsion to enable missions beyond Earth with an eye toward Mars. Thornburg also oversees flight, test, development and research operations while also supporting customer interactions, including those with NASA and the U.S. Air Force. He has a master's degree in aeronautical engineering from the U.S. Air Force Institute of Technology and a bachelor's of science in aerospace engineering from the University of Missouri-Rolla.

Prior to joining SpaceX, Jeff was a lead propulsion engineer and turbomachinery technical project manager for the J-2X engine development program at the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center. Recently, the J-2X project has successfully tested both Engine 10001 and 10002 which utilized turbomachinery designed and built during Jeff's tenure on the J-2X program. Before joining NASA, Jeff spent 4 years working for Aerojet as an engineering director for their liquid engine turbomachinery group and serving as the site manager for the Aerojet-Woodland Hills engineering office in Woodland Hills, CA.

Jeff started his career in the U.S. Air Force and served as a flight commander and aircraft maintenance officer on KC-135R tanker aircraft at MacDill AFB, FL. He was then selected to attend the Air Force Institute of Technology and earned his Master's degree in Aeronautical Engineering. Jeff was then stationed at Edwards AFB, CA where he joined the liquid rocket engine branch at the Air Force Research Laboratory and worked several component and engine technology programs that included his leadership of the joint Air Force-NASA Integrated Powerhead Demonstration engine which was the world's first hydrogen full-flow staged combustion cycle engine demonstration. Since his first assignment to Edwards AFB, Jeff has been very fortunate to have a career that has associated him with almost all liquid engine technology development programs since the development of the Space Shuttle Main Engine.

Jeff has received numerous Air Force and NASA awards including a NASA Space Flight Awareness award, the NASA Made It Happen award, the NASA Stennis Space Center Propulsion Test Director's Leadership Award, and was an Air Force Research Laboratory Technical Program Manager of the Year. Jeff and his wife, Jessica, live in El Segundo, CA with their daughter Jameson.