

Joel R. Montalbano

Associate Administrator for Space Operations (acting) National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Joel R. Montalbano is the acting associate administrator for NASA's Space Operations Mission Directorate. In this role, Montalbano lends his vast experience to meet the nation's goals of establishing a low Earth orbit economy and to maintain America's leadership space.

He previously served as the International Space Station Program Manager, where he was responsible for the overall management, development, integration, and operation of the orbiting laboratory. This nearly \$3 billion per year, 15-nation program encompasses the design, manufacture, testing and delivery of complex space flight hardware and software and its integration with modules from international partners into a fully functional and operating space station with a permanent human presence. As program manager, Montalbano was responsible for policy development, international partner negotiations, development of low Earth orbit commercialization, onboard research and utilization, and the overall safety and health of the crew and on-orbit vehicle.

Prior to his role as International Space Station program manager, Montalbano served as the deputy program manager for the International Space Station Program Office, where he provided day-to-day management of the program and worked across space station organizations, NASA centers, other government agencies, and partners to ensure seamless and efficient space station integration, and ensure recognition as a national laboratory with defined projects that supported national, agency, and program goals for scientific, technological, diplomatic, and educational purposes.

Montalbano served as the director of NASA's Human Space Flight Program in Russia from 2008 to 2012. He was also a NASA flight director from 2000 to 2008. Each NASA flight director chooses a symbol and color to represent his team. Montalbano chose Flash for his flight control team. In Mission Control Center, the Foundation of Mission Operations states "To always be aware that suddenly and unexpectedly we may find ourselves in a role where our performance has ultimate consequences." At all times, the flight control team must be able to react quickly and decisively – in a flash.

Montalbano started his career at Rockwell in June 1988 and became a NASA civil servant in August 1998. He was inducted into the Senior Executive Service in 2008.

In 2018, Montalbano was recognized with the NASA Distinguished Service Medal as well as the Advancement of International Cooperation Award by the American Astronomical Society. Over the course of his career, Montalbano received several awards in honor of his accomplishments, including: the Johnson Space Center Directors Commendation (2017), Rank of Meritorious Executive, conferred by the President of the United States (2012), NASA Exceptional Service Medal and the Superior Accomplishment Award (2007), NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal (2004), Rotary Space Award Nominee, and NASA Exceptional Service Medal (2003), and the Director Plaque Hanging Honor at NASA's Mission Control Center (1997 and 1995). Additionally, he was awarded the Astronaut's Silver Snoopy and was a Manned Space Flight Awareness Honoree in 1994. Montalbano has also earned the Boy Scouts of America rank of Eagle Scout.

Montalbano received a bachelor's degree in aerospace, aeronautical, and astronautical engineering from Iowa State University.