



Wait, What?

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The Federal Aviation Administration wants to fine Elon Musk's spacefaring firm SpaceX \$633,000 for various alleged infractions of FAA regulations. In response, Musk [says](#) he's suing the agency for "regulatory overreach."

One set of fines pertains to using an "unapproved control room" and failure to "conduct the required T-2 hour poll" during a June 2023 launch: 350,000 smackers.

Another set, totaling \$283,000, is for using an "unapproved rocket propellant farm," i.e., tanks for storing fuel until it's pumped into the ships, back in July 2023.

Meanwhile, the Justice Department [has sued](#) SpaceX for hiring "only U.S. citizens and lawful permanent

residents" (wait, what?) and failing to take into account currently prevailing political winds. Perhaps the FAA should sue the Justice Department for expecting SpaceX to focus on anything but its missions.

The initial reporting doesn't make clear whether there's any merit to the FAA's complaints—wrong specs for fuel tanks or whatever. The mere deviation from some regulation is meaningless if what SpaceX did instead is as safe or safer than what the bureaucrats stipulated.

Large enterprises must navigate an infinite number of regulations, and federal agencies are certainly selective enforcers. If you're Boeing, it seems you can get away with shoddy practices for years, at least until the fit hits the shan.

I'll wait to hear more, but I suspect that the FAA's attempt to grab hundreds of thousands of dollars from Musk is indeed a symptom of regulatory overreach.

And just possibly motivated by ... *politics*.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.