

# Announcing MarkeTips' Apollo 13 Duct Tape Challenge

On April 13, 1970, exactly 55 hours, and 54 minutes and 53 seconds into the flight of Apollo 13, a cryogenic oxygen tank exploded on the spacecraft, crippling the ship and causing the command-service module to suffer a loss of oxygen and power. The accident ended the chance for a moon landing and cast the lives of the three astronauts on board into grave danger. To conserve oxygen, astronauts Jim Lovell, Jack Swigert, and Fred Haise quickly moved into the lunar module. But the lunar module had been designed to house only the two astronauts who would have descended to the lunar surface. Now, with three of them in the lunar module, carbon dioxide was building up to lethal levels in the spacecraft's atmosphere. The lithium hydroxide canisters, which filtered out the carbon dioxide and which were part of the lunar module's air filtration system, were fast being used up. Additional lithium hydroxide canisters had been brought from the command-service module, but unlike the round-ended canisters for the lunar module, these had square ends. The crew needed a way to fit them to the air circulation system in the lunar module. Following instructions from ground control, they used duct tape, packaging material, and other scavenged items from the craft to rig up a system that would allow them to use the square ended canisters. The adapted device worked, and the three astronauts came home safely.

In honor of this historic achievement in space flight improvisation, *MarkeTips* is announcing the ***Apollo 13 Duct Tape Challenge***. We'd like you to send us a brief account, in 150 words or less, of how you used duct tape to save a moment from certain disaster, or maybe just avoided a real inconvenience.

Maybe you have a story about using duct tape in a way that's fairly routine or everyday to you, but that most folks in government just wouldn't know about. Or maybe you just have a really good story with a duct tape tie-in. (Maybe you even have a good story about using duct tape to seal duct work with.)

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**Interior view of Apollo 13 Lunar Module. Command Module pilot John L. Swigert (R.) In the background is the jerry-rigged system assembled with duct tape and using lithium hydroxide canisters that would scrub carbon dioxide from the Lunar Module's atmosphere.**

Whatever it is, we want to hear about it. Submissions will be considered for publication in *MarkeTips* based on ingenuity, usefulness, instructional value, and storytelling ability (all accounts must be true). *MarkeTips* reserves the right to modify submissions for purposes of style and clarity. Only entries by federal employees will be accepted, but stories about fixing something at home or stories you've heard from someone else will be considered. We'll include as many acceptable entries as space permits. If published, you'll get your name in *MarkeTips*, you'll receive a free copy of the issue in which your submission appears, and best of all, you'll have bragging rights in your place of federal employment. Good Luck!

Submissions should be made to:

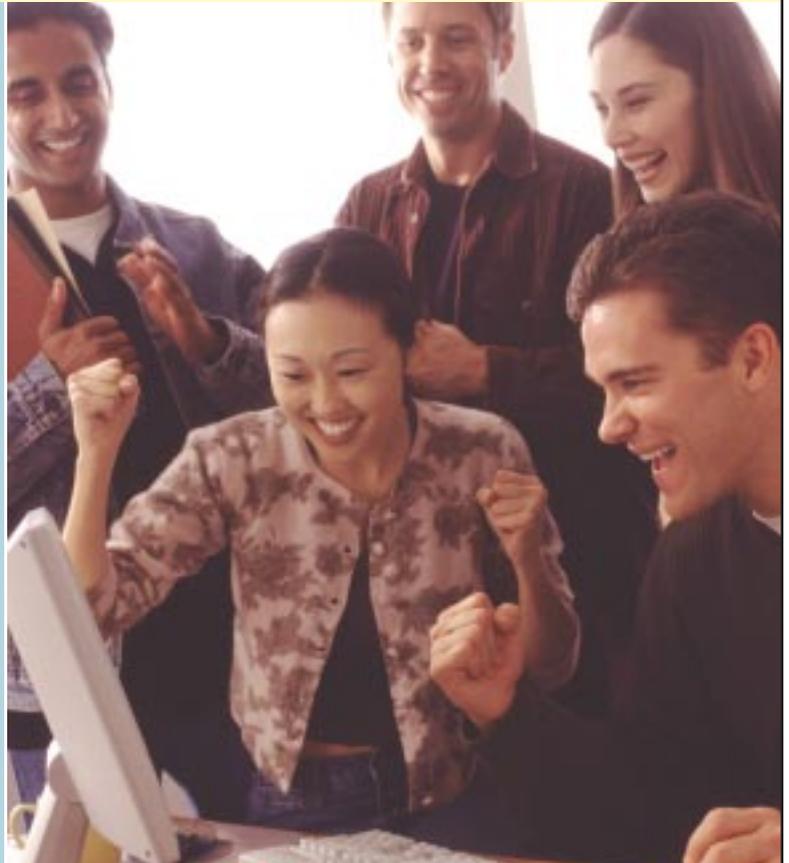
Apollo 13 — Duct Tape Challenge  
Attn: MarkeTips Editor  
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