

0. EARLY WARNINGS - Story Preface

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The official insignia, for *Challenger's* STS 51-L mission, includes something unusual: an apple. It symbolizes that a teacher was part of the shuttle's 7-member crew.

A potential disaster had loomed long before that fateful January day.

Although NASA had flown twenty-four successful shuttle missions before STS 51-L (the official name for the January 1986 *Challenger* mission), other flights had experienced lesser versions of the same problem which caused the *Challenger* explosion.

Neither the astronauts, nor their families, knew about it.

But the manufacturer of the shuttle's solid rocket booster (SRB) and solid rocket motor (SRM) knew. So did some of the management officials at NASA.

Roger Boisjoly a Morton Thiokol engineer, did his best to warn both his employer and NASA. He, and others, knew about the design flaw.

But the people Boisjoly reported to wouldn't listen.

And the people who made the ultimate decisions at NASA weren't told.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/EARLY-WARNINGS-Challenger-Disaster)

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Media Stream



Challenger Mission STS 51-L

NASA image, online via National Air and Space Museum at the Smithsonian.

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Roger Boisjoly - Warned Morton Thiokol About O-rings

Image online, courtesy Online Ethics Center at the [National Academy of Engineering](#).

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