

NASA postpones satellite launch

May 11 2005

NASA's launch of the NOAA-N environmental satellite for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was postponed for 24 hours due to high winds.

Launch is scheduled at 6:22 a.m. EDT, Thursday, May 12 pending favorable weather conditions.

Surface wind at the time of the rollback of the gantry surrounding the Boeing Delta II launch vehicle was as high as 36 knots. That was approximately seven knots above the limits at Space Launch Complex 2, Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. Forecast models will be reviewed this afternoon for a final check before the gantry rollback begins at approximately 9 p.m. EDT, today.

NOAA-N is the latest polar-orbiting satellite developed by NASA for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA-N will collect information about Earth's atmosphere and environment to improve weather prediction and climate research across the globe.

NOAA-N is the 15th in a series of polar-orbiting satellites dating back to 1978. NOAA uses two satellites, a morning and afternoon satellite, to ensure every part of the Earth is observed at least twice every 12 hours.

Severe weather is monitored and reported to the National Weather Service which broadcasts the findings to the global community. With the early warning, effects of catastrophic weather events can be minimized.

NOAA-N also has instruments to support an international search-and-rescue program. The Search and Rescue Satellite-Aided Tracking System, called COPAS-SARSAT, transmits to ground stations the location of emergency beacons from ships, aircraft and people in distress around the world. The program, in place since 1982, has saved about 18,000 lives.

NOAA-N is the first in a series of polar-orbiting satellites to be part of a joint cooperation project with the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMESTAT).

Source: NASA

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