

Discovery debris may have struck wing

July 29 2005

NASA scientists say a small piece of insulating foam that came off space shuttle Discovery during its Tuesday launch may have struck the orbiter's wing.

But National Aeronautics and Space Administration engineers said they don't believe the foam caused any damage, a NASA official said late Thursday.

Camera footage showed foam about 7 inches long and 2 inches wide separating from the spacecraft's external tank at an altitude of about 200,000 feet toward the wing, Deputy Program Manager Wayne Hale said.

Hale said sensors on the wing didn't detect any impact, but even if the foam did strike the wing, NASA calculations showed the impact would have had about a tenth of the energy necessary to cause damage.

An even larger piece of foam also fell off the tank, but NASA officials don't believe it struck the orbiter, CNN reported. The larger piece was similar to the piece of foam that damaged Columbia's wing in February 2003, eventually causing the shuttle to break up during re-entry killing all seven astronauts aboard.

NASA experts are expected to develop a "fly-home as-is recommendation or a repair recommendation, as required," Hale said.

Copyright 2005 by United Press International

Citation: Discovery debris may have struck wing (2005, July 29) retrieved 17 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-07-discovery-debris-struck-wing.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.