

Katrina damages NASA facilities

August 31 2005

Hurricane Katrina damaged NASA spaceport facilities along the Gulf Coast, casting doubt on the space shuttle's scheduled March launch.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration said its Michoud Assembly Facility east of New Orleans and the Stennis Space Center near Bay St. Louis, Miss., both experienced considerable wind damage and will remain closed indefinitely.

Damaged roofs and water leaks were found throughout the 832-acre Michoud complex, where Lockheed Martin manufactures the shuttle's external fuel tank. In Michoud's main manufacturing building, concrete roof panels were blown away by winds gusting to 125 mph, leaving a large hole, the Orlando Sentinel reported.

Stennis Space Center is used by NASA to test rocket engines. That facility reported serious roof and water damage. Stennis is currently being used by state and federal officials as a shelter and base for relief operations.

If NASA is to meet its March 4-19 launch window, a newly redesigned fuel tank must leave Michoud by barge for Kennedy Space Center by mid-November. NASA officials say the chance of that occurring appears remote. The next launch window is May 3-22.

Copyright 2005 by United Press International

Citation: Katrina damages NASA facilities (2005, August 31) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-08-katrina-nasa-facilities.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.