

Big chunk of space junk misses space station

September 4 2009, By MARCIA DUNN , AP Aerospace Writer



An image taken from NASA video shows a spacewalker Christer Fuglesang holding an old ammonia tank outside the International Space Station during a spacewalk of the STS-128 mission Thursday, Sept. 3, 2009. (AP Photo/NASA TV)

(AP) -- A big piece of space junk safely sped by the international space station and shuttle Discovery, missing by less than a mile.

The astronauts were still asleep Friday when the old rocket part, measuring 15 feet around, passed by. NASA had been monitoring the situation and decided that it was unlikely to be a problem, so controllers did not move the station-shuttle complex.

Astronauts went ahead with a [spacewalk](#) Thursday night to install a new fully loaded tank of space station coolant.

The near-miss was at 11:07 a.m. EDT. NASA officials said the closest it was to the astronauts was about 4,200 feet - about 14 football fields.

On the Net:

NASA: http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/shuttle/main/index.html

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