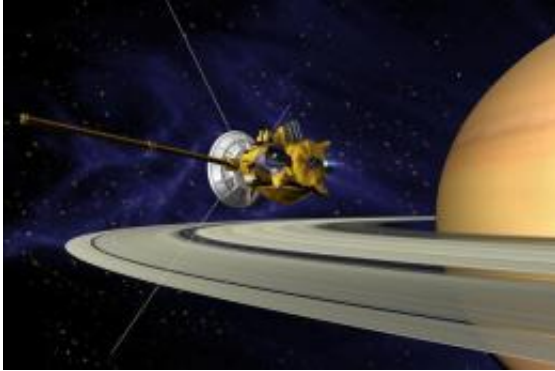


Engineers assessing Cassini spacecraft

November 5 2010, By Jia-Rui C. Cook



Artist's concept of NASA's Cassini spacecraft at Saturn. Image credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

Engineers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif., are working to understand what caused NASA's Cassini spacecraft to put itself into "safe mode," a precautionary standby mode. Cassini entered safe mode around 4 p.m. PDT (7 p.m. EDT) on Tuesday, Nov. 2.

Since going into [safe mode](#), the spacecraft has performed as expected, suspending the flow of science data and sending back only data about engineering and spacecraft health. Cassini is programmed to put itself into safe mode automatically any time it detects a condition on the spacecraft that requires action from mission controllers on the ground.

Engineers say it is not likely that Cassini will be able to resume full operations before a planned Nov. 11 [flyby](#) of Saturn's moon Titan. But

Cassini has 53 more Titan flybys planned in its extended mission, which lasts until 2017.

"The spacecraft responded exactly as it should have, and I fully expect that we will get Cassini back up and running with no problems," said Bob Mitchell, Cassini program manager based at JPL. "Over the more than six years we have been at Saturn, this is only the second safing event. So considering the complexity of demands we have made on Cassini, the spacecraft has performed exceptionally well for us."

Since Cassini launched in 1997, Cassini has put itself into safe mode a total of six times.

The Cassini-Huygens mission is a cooperative project of [NASA](#), the [European Space Agency](#) and the Italian Space Agency. The Jet Propulsion Laboratory, a division of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, manages the mission for NASA's Science Mission Directorate, Washington.

Provided by JPL/NASA

Citation: Engineers assessing Cassini spacecraft (2010, November 5) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-11-cassini-spacecraft.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.