

'Xombie' rocket makes first free-flight for NASA

February 16 2012

A privately built rocket has made its first free-flight in the California desert as part of a NASA program exploring vertical landing systems for solar system exploration.

The [autonomous flight](#) occurred earlier this month at the Mojave Air and Space Port about 90 miles north of Los Angeles.

Masten Space Systems' [unmanned rocket](#) named Xombie lifted off the ground, flew horizontally and landed at a pad 164 feet away. The demonstration lasted 67 seconds.

In 2009, Masten won a \$1 million prize in a NASA-backed simulated [lunar landing](#) contest using the Xombie rocket. The space agency awarded Masten and another company, Armadillo Aerospace, \$475,000 in 2010 to test vehicles that could carry small payloads to "near-space" - altitudes between 65,000 feet and 350,000 feet.

©2012 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: 'Xombie' rocket makes first free-flight for NASA (2012, February 16) retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-02-xombie-rocket-free-flight-nasa.html>

<p>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.</p>
--