NASA postpones Mars 'flying saucer' test on Earth (Update)

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In this undated image provided by NASA a saucer-shaped test vehicle holding equipment for landing large payloads on Mars is shown in the Missile Assembly Building at the US Navy's Pacific Missile Range Facility in Kauai, Hawaii. On Wednesday, June 11, 2014 weather permitting, a balloon carrying the saucer-shaped vehicle is set to launch from Hawaii. (AP Photo/NASA)

The U.S. space agency has postponed its plan to send a "flying saucer"

into Earth's atmosphere to test technology that could be used to land on Mars.

NASA spokeswoman Shannon Ridinger says weather conditions caused Wednesday's launch of the saucer-shaped vehicle to be delayed. The next potential launch date is June 14.

NASA has depended on the same parachute design to slow spacecraft after they enter the Martian atmosphere. But it needs a larger and stronger parachute if it wants to land heavier objects and astronauts.

After being launched via balloon from Hawaii, the new vehicle will ignite its rocket engine and climb to 34 miles (54 kilometers). It will slow itself down from supersonic speeds and unfurl a parachute for a water landing.