

NASA to test Mars 'flying saucer' vehicle on Earth

June 28 2014

After several weather delays, NASA will try to launch a "flying saucer" into Earth's atmosphere Saturday to test technology that could be used to land on Mars.

The attempt off the coast of the Hawaiian island of Kauai will test the disc-shaped vehicle and a giant parachute.

Since the 1970s, NASA has used the same parachute design to slow landers and rovers as they streak through the thin Martian atmosphere. With plans to send heavier spacecraft and eventually astronauts, the space agency needs a much stronger parachute.

NASA is testing the technology high in Earth's atmosphere because conditions there are similar to that of Mars.

High winds at the Kauai military range forced NASA to miss its original two-week launch window in June.

© 2014 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: NASA to test Mars 'flying saucer' vehicle on Earth (2014, June 28) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-06-nasa-mars-saucer-vehicle-earth.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>
--