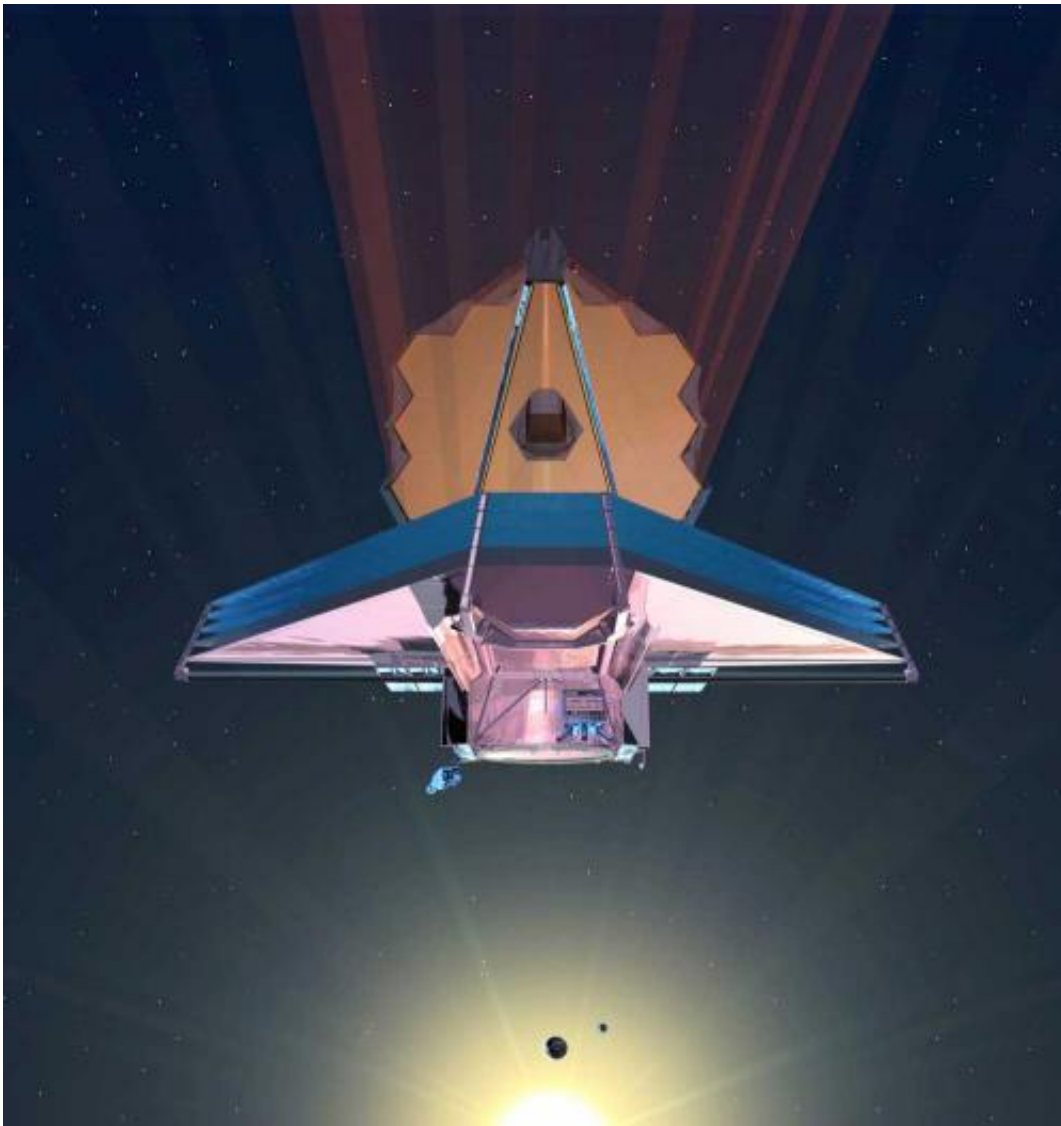


NASA's Webb Telescope mirror tripod in action (Video)

November 25 2014



Artist's concept of the James Webb Space Telescope in orbit. Credit: NASA

Setting up NASA's James Webb Space Telescope's secondary mirror in space will require special arms that resemble a tripod. NASA recently demonstrated that test in a NASA cleanroom and it was documented in a time-lapse video.

The secondary mirror support structure will unfurl in space to about 8 meters (26.2 feet) long once it is deployed. Recently, engineers in the giant cleanroom at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland tested the "tripod" in a successful deploy.

"This is the first time we have performed a deployment with a mirror on it and is an important next step in proving the system will work in space as planned," said Lee Feinberg NASA's Optical Telescope Element manager at the agency's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland.

Engineers did a test run using the Webb's "Pathfinder" backplane, or [test](#) "backbone" structure, to ensure that one of the secondary mirrors would set up properly in its orbit a million miles from Earth.

"The deployment of the tripod that holds the secondary mirror has a tipping point, and this is controlled by the yellow gravity off-loading device," said Ray Lundquist, the Webb telescope ISIM Lead Systems Engineer at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

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