

NASA: Contact lost with spacecraft on way to test moon orbit

July 5 2022



Rebecca Rogers, systems engineer, left, takes dimension measurements of the CAPSTONE spacecraft in April 2022, at Tyvak Nano-Satellite Systems, Inc., in Irvine, Calif. NASA said Tuesday, July 5, that it has lost contact with a \$32.7 million spacecraft headed to moon to test out a lopsided lunar orbit, but agency engineers are hopeful they can fix the problem. Credit: Dominic Hart/NASA via AP

NASA said Tuesday it has lost contact with a \$32.7 million spacecraft headed to the moon to test out a lopsided lunar orbit, but agency engineers are hopeful they can fix the problem.

After one successful communication and a second partial one on Monday, the [space agency](#) said it could no longer communicate with the spacecraft called Capstone. Engineers are trying to find the cause of the communications drop-off and are optimistic they can fix it, NASA spokesperson Sarah Frazier said Tuesday.

The spacecraft, which launched from New Zealand on June 28, had spent nearly a week in Earth orbit and had been successfully kick-started on its way to the moon, when contact was lost, Frazier said.

The 55-pound satellite is the size of a microwave oven and will be the first spacecraft to try out this oval orbit, which is where NASA wants to stage its Gateway outpost. Gateway would serve as a staging point for astronauts before they descend to the [lunar surface](#).

The orbit balances the gravities of Earth and the moon and so requires little maneuvering and therefore fuel and allows the satellite—or a [space station](#)—to stay in constant contact with Earth.

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