

New rocket company fails to achieve launch on 2nd attempt

September 30 2022

A year after its first rocket launch failed, a new aerospace company was unsuccessful early Friday in its second attempt to place multiple satellites into orbit.

[Firefly Aerospace's Alpha](#) rocket was unable to lift off from Vandenberg Space Force Base, California, and follow a planned arc over the Pacific Ocean toward space.

A live video feed showed the launch countdown go to zero and then abort at 12:52 a.m. Friday.

"The vehicle went into auto abort after ignition. This is designed into the system to ensure safety," the company said in a Twitter post. "The team scrubbed tonight's [launch attempt](#) and is reviewing data to determine our next launch window."

The rocket's payload included multiple [small satellites](#) designed for a variety of technology experiments and demonstrations as well as educational purposes.

The mission, dubbed "To The Black," was the company's second demonstration flight of its entry into the market for small satellite launchers.

The first Alpha was launched from Vandenberg on Sept. 2, 2021, but did not reach orbit.

One of the four first-stage engines shut down prematurely but the rocket continued upward on three engines into the supersonic realm where it tumbled out of control.

The rocket was then intentionally destroyed by an explosive flight termination system.

Firefly Aerospace said the premature shutdown was traced to an electrical issue, but that the rocket had otherwise performed well and useful data was obtained during the nearly 2 1/2 minutes of flight.

Alpha is designed to carry payloads weighing as much as 2,579 pounds (1,170 kilograms) to low Earth orbit.

Other competitors in the burgeoning small-launch market include Rocket Lab and Virgin Orbit, both headquartered in Long Beach, California.

Firefly Aerospace, based in Cedar Park, Texas, is also planning a larger [rocket](#), a vehicle for in-space operations and a lander for carrying NASA and commercial payloads to the surface of the moon.

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Citation: New rocket company fails to achieve launch on 2nd attempt (2022, September 30) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-09-rocket-company-2nd.html>

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