

1st test launch by Richard Branson's Virgin Orbit postponed

May 24 2020

Richard Branson's Virgin Orbit postponed its first space launch Sunday due to a technical problem.

The company said one sensor was "acting up" and fuel was being offloaded from the rocket in Mojave, California, to address what it termed a minor issue.

"This means we are scrubbed for today," it said in its social media post.

A backup launch window was available Monday morning but the company did not immediately announce its revised plan for the inaugural use of its air launch system.

Virgin Orbit's rocket is carried beneath the wing of a Boeing 747 that will take off from Mojave Air and Space Port in the desert north of Los Angeles and fly out over the Pacific Ocean.

The rocket will be released and its motor will ignite a few seconds later to propel a dummy satellite into low Earth orbit.

Virgin Orbit, based in Long Beach, California, is a sister company to Virgin Galactic, the space tourism company preparing to carry passengers on suborbital flights over New Mexico.

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