



ICBM Test Rocket Exploded Seconds After Launch, Briefly Setting Fire To California Base

Description

USA: A late night ICBM missile test in California ended in disaster, as it exploded just seconds after lift-off on Wednesday.

Officials with the Vandenberg Space Force Base in Lompoc, California confirmed that **“The Minotaur II space launch vehicle exploded approximately 11 seconds after launching off the test pad at 11:01 p.m. local time, Vandenberg,”** which was announced Thursday morning.



ICBM launch illustrative file image

The incident **resulted in a fire on base**, though officials noted that debris from the blast didn't stray outside of the "immediate vicinity" of the launch pad. The local Vandenberg Fire Department responded and was able to put out the fire before it threatened other areas of the base. No injuries were reported.

A cause of the failed test was not immediately clear, and it's under investigation. Local reports, citing military press releases, say the test was originally slated for Thursday morning but was moved up to late Wednesday night for unknown reasons.

"The military base was **testing the U.S. Air Force's new missile rocket**, which is expected to be used with the future LGM-35A Sentinel intercontinental ballistic missile," one area report details.

"Both are being developed by the Air Force's Nuclear Weapons Center to will replace the aging Minuteman missiles that have previously been tested at the Central Coast base, located near Lompoc," the reported added.



Vandenberg Air Force Base in Lompoc, CA. Military file image

According to a defense journal the launch was intended to demonstrate the vehicle's "preliminary design concepts and relevant payload technologies in operationally realistic environments," based on an Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center statement.

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Date Created

07/08/2022