

SpaceX Starship explodes again, this time on the ground

Late Wednesday night at about 11PM CT, SpaceX was about to perform a static fire test of Ship 36, ahead of a planned 10th flight test for its Starship, when there was suddenly a massive explosion at the Massey's Testing Center site. SpaceX says "A safety clear area around the site was maintained throughout the operation and all personnel are safe and accounted for," and that there are no hazards to residents in the area of its recently incorporated town of Starbase, Texas.

"After completing a single-engine static fire earlier this week, the vehicle was in the process of loading cryogenic propellant for a six-engine static fire when a sudden energetic event resulted in the complete loss of Starship and damage to the immediate area surrounding the stand," according to an update on SpaceX's website. "The explosion ignited several fires at the test site which remains clear of personnel and will be assessed once it has been determined to be safe to approach. Individuals should not attempt to approach the area while safing operations continue."

The explosion follows others during the seventh, eighth, and ninth Starship flight tests earlier this year. "Initial analysis indicates the potential failure of a pressurized tank known as a COPV, or composite overwrapped pressure vessel, containing gaseous nitrogen in Starship's nosecone area, but the full data review is ongoing," SpaceX says. On X, the company called the explosion a "major anomaly."

Fox 26 Houston says that, according to authorities, there have

been no injuries reported. SpaceX also says no injuries have been reported.

This flight test would've continued using SpaceX's "V2" Starship design, which Musk said in 2023, "holds more propellant, reduces dry mass and improves reliability." SpaceX is also preparing a new V3 design that, according to Musk, was tracking toward a rate of launching once a week in about 12 months.

Update, June 19th: Added information from SpaceX.

<https://www.theverge.com/news/689901/spacex-starship-explosion-static-fire-test>