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Falcon 9's engine tests alarmed the neighborhood spacex

[SpaceX Gets Loud](#)

A Falcon 9 engine firing test causes neighborhood panic

Citizens in the neighborhood of SpaceX's McGregor Test Facility in Texas have hopefully calmed down by now, following the panic stirred Saturday night. They must have been assured that no war, Sun explosion or alien invasion was in place at the time, as some appear to have believed. In fact, the reaction was caused by the successful test of the full mission-length firing of the company's Falcon 9 launch vehicle.

The almost three-minute long event took place on November 22nd, at 10:30 pm local time. Although this is just one in a very long series of more than 2,000 similar tests, something determined the light and the loud noise of the ignition and firing to reach as far as the populated zone. The locals perceived them as a loud bomb explosion, as their windows and walls trembled for the whole duration of the test. "In the past month, we performed significant upgrades to the test stand and flame trench in preparation for this test," shared Tom Mueller, Vice President of Propulsion for [SpaceX](#). "We added the flight base heat shields around the engines to protect the bottom of the rocket from the prolonged blast of heat and vibration." But the company's spokesperson, Lauren Dryer, explained that the weather conditions during the test enabled sound and light to travel further than usual and affect populated areas. "A combination of low clouds and cool temperatures drastically affected the distance the sound and light traveled," stated Dryer, quoted by [Universe Today](#). The nine engines were [fired](#) for 160 seconds, two of them being switched off for 18 remaining seconds, until all were stopped. During the 178 seconds, a rocket launch was simulated, and the full throttle of the engines was four times the power of a 747 airplane.

SpaceX representatives state that the event was properly announced, but obviously ignored, and suggested that media should pay more attention to similar events in the future. "We notified police, fire, and the city of McGregor. We even went a few extra steps further and put it on the high school marquee and in the McGregor Mirror," said Dryer, cited by [KXXV](#). Perhaps in response they will also take weather factors into consideration before reiterating such a test from now on.