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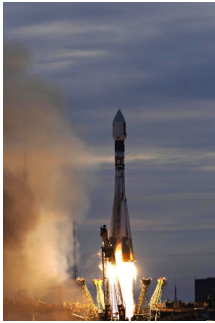


Image of the launch of the Venus Express spacecraft from the Baikonur launchpad
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[Watch Out, It's Raining Rocket Parts](#)

Fallen rocket part almost destroys outdoor toilet

The Russian Roskosmos agency was recently sued by an inhabitant of Russia's Altai region for 42,000 US dollars, in compensation for the fact that a 3 meters piece of metal from one of its space rockets fell on his property, near the outdoor toilet. Shepherd Boris Urmatov lives in a area which is located right in the flight path of the spacecrafts being launched from the Baikonur launchpad, in Kazakhstan.

Urmatov said in a interview that one night he was awoken by a powerful noise, resembling the sound of some kind of explosion. "Since he's visually handicapped he didn't notice the fallen rocket parts," said Urmatov's sister. Maria, who lives in the village of Kyrlyk, 3,840 kilometers away from the capital city of Russia, Moscow, says that the next day Urmatov woke up and saw an enormous metal casing right in front of his hut. "It nearly crushed the outhouse," she said.

According to residents from the neighboring areas, all sorts of rocket parts rain down over their villages, although they are well out of the specially designated zone where people are not supposed to go when a launch is in progress. Ust-Kan resident Anatoly Kazakov adds "Sometimes it's smooth metal rocket casings, sometime it's bolts. I remember something like an engine fell once."

Now Maria and her brother request compensations from the Russian authorities for the event. During its 50 years of activity, Roskosmos launched more than 400 rockets into space, some of which fell into designated areas, but most of them fell outside those zones. This is why the Russian space agency regularly updates the residents of the areas with the schedule of the launch program.

Roskosmos spokesperson Alexander Vorobyov said: "Technologically speaking, these parts are supposed to fall off during a launch. They fly, they fall, the fly, they fall. It's how they work." Also, the Russian space agency conducts routine checks of the damage caused by the fall of such parts, however its protocol prevents it from paying compensation if the part does no damage, fact that is determined in the court of law.

"If a court determines that, yes, those are rocket parts, they fell on his land, then for sure he will be compensated. No question about it. We live in a civilized, law-abiding country," said Vorobyov. According to Reuters, the Russian space agency payed compensations for such an event only once, in 2001, when a rocket part fell into the yard of a citizen while he was out chopping wood. The amount of money payed to the man was 10,000 rubles, or about 250 dollars.

"What is abnormal is when somebody gets greedy, and it turns out the parts did not fall on his land, but that they were dragged there. But those are individual instances. We in no way refuse to pay out compensation. It just has to go through the court system," said Vorobyov.