



WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE

Press Release

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Launch Rescheduled at Fort Wingate

WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE, N.M. (Oct. 4, 2024) – Technical challenges resulted in the rescheduling of a planned missile launch at Fort Wingate near Gallup, N.M., for a Black Dagger target missile firing from the old depot to White Sands Missile Range.

The launch has been tentatively rescheduled for Friday, Oct. 18, between 630 and 730 a.m. and may be viewed from Red Rock State Park.

Missile range officials stress that roadblocks are subject to change on short notice. Should conditions, including weather, be less than optimal Thursday, the firing will be rescheduled for a later date.

The Black Dagger missile will drop a booster into an evacuated safety zone during its flight to the missile range. In addition to this safety drop zone just south of Fort Wingate there will be short safety roadblocks and evacuations around the immediate Fort Wingate area – mostly to the south and east.

The roadblocks include the following: New Mexico Route 400 between the Fort Wingate historic monument and McGaffey Lake; Forest Route 191 between New Mexico Route 400 and six miles to the west; Forest Route 547 between Sixmile Spring and McGaffey Lake. In addition, gates along New Mexico Route 400 will be closed to passage.

The roadblocks should last between two and four hours. However, traffic traveling straight through on New Mexico Route 400 will be screened through up to 30 minutes before launch time.

In addition to the roadblocks, Quaking Aspens campground will be evacuated for the launch. Since the firing will be in the early morning, camping at the site will not be allowed the night before so that National Forest Service officials can be assured the area is evacuated.

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The evacuation area for the booster drop zone is comprised of national forest lands south of Fort Wingate. Roadblocks on the perimeter of the area will be set at 4 a.m.

The airspace over Fort Wingate and the booster drop zone will be restricted for several hours for the launch. The avoidance area will be posted by the Federal Aviation Agency in the form of a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM). The airspace at the end of the flight is over White Sands Missile Range and is already restricted.

Area residents may watch the launch from Red Rock State Park. The time of the launch is currently scheduled for between 630 and 730 a.m.

There have more than a dozen target missions from Fort Wingate to White Sands Missile Range. The first mission was conducted in November 1997.

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White Sands Missile Range, DoD's largest, fully-instrumented, open air range, provides America's Armed Forces, allies, partners, and defense technology innovators with the world's premiere research, development, test, evaluation, experimentation, and training facilities to ensure our nation's defense readiness.