# Cold War space relic Kosmos 482 may crash in UK in May 2025



A significant piece of Cold War-era space debris, known as the Kosmos 482, is on a trajectory that may lead to a potential impact in the United Kingdom between May 9 and May 13, 2025. Weighing approximately 500 kilograms, this relic of a Soviet space mission is causing unease among residents in areas south of Cambridge, Ipswich, and Milton Keynes.

Dr Marco Langbroek, an expert in orbiting objects at Delft University of Technology, has identified a probable re-entry zone stretching between 52 degrees north and south latitude, which encompasses rural England and includes affected towns and villages. Speaking to the International Business Times UK, Dr Langbroek emphasised the unpredictability of the re-entry path, stating, "This ghostly returnee from the Space Race era follows no predictable path, with experts unable to determine precisely when and where it might land."

The Kosmos 482 mission originally launched in 1972 with the intention of studying Venus. However, a propulsion failure prevented it from leaving Earth's orbit, resulting in the spacecraft breaking into multiple fragments. Shortly after the launch, two of these fragments disintegrated over New Zealand, an event that Soviet officials did not officially acknowledge. Scientists now believe the last unaccounted-for piece of the Kosmos 482 may be racing towards Earth at speeds reaching 17,000 miles per hour.

Despite the formidable speed, the overall risk of an impact remains low, although not negligible. Dr Langbroek noted that the capsule’s titanium exterior, designed for the harsh conditions of Venus, may allow it to reach Earth relatively intact. He remarked, "The risks involved are not particularly high, but not zero," indicating that the object could survive re-entry due to its robust construction.

Dr Jonathan McDowell, an astronomer monitoring satellite re-entries, weighed in on the situation, stating: "The vehicle is dense but inert and has no nuclear materials. No need for major concern, but you wouldn't want it bashing you on the head." He emphasised that while there is a theoretical chance of the object causing damage, the likelihood of it striking a populated area is exceedingly slim. According to Dr McDowell, when landing something randomly on Earth, the chance of it hitting a person is about one in 10,000, which translates to an even smaller likelihood of individual homes being affected.

As the Kosmos 482 approaches Earth, it will likely generate heat, forming a fireball as it descends. Dr McDowell predicts a rapid deceleration upon re-entry, with speeds at impact ranging from 145 to 157 miles per hour. Although the capsule originally had a parachute to ease its landing, astronomers are uncertain if this is still functional, complicating assessments of the potential impact event.

Recent observations by Dutch satellite tracker Ralf Vandebergh provided high-resolution images of the Kosmos 482 craft, raising questions about the status of its parachute. Vandebergh noted that the images suggested a structure which may indicate the parachute was deployed in orbit, raising concerns about its ability to mitigate the impact velocity.

As the world watches this relic of a bygone era approach re-entry, the implications resonate far beyond the United Kingdom, touching parts of Europe, the contiguous United States, Australia, South America, and Africa as well. As millions remain vigilant in southern England, they find themselves part of a global chapter involving a space mission that dates back nearly 50 years.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.apnews.com/article/298aab6aabd799f2881bdb8279b9d9c7> - This article discusses the impending re-entry of the Soviet-era spacecraft Kosmos 482, launched in 1972, into Earth's atmosphere after over 50 years in orbit. It highlights the spacecraft's original mission to study Venus and the subsequent failure that left it in Earth's orbit, leading to its current re-entry trajectory.
* <https://www.livescience.com/space/space-exploration/doomed-soviet-spacecraft-tumbling-toward-earth-may-already-have-its-parachute-out-new-images-hint> - This article provides insights into recent observations of the Kosmos 482 spacecraft, including high-resolution images suggesting the possible deployment of its parachute. It discusses the implications of these findings on the spacecraft's re-entry and potential impact.
* <https://www.weebau.com/satcosmos/0/0482.htm> - This source offers detailed information about the Kosmos 482 mission, including its launch, intended mission to Venus, and the subsequent failure that resulted in the spacecraft remaining in Earth's orbit. It also covers the re-entry predictions and potential impact zones.
* <https://www.universetoday.com/141742/spot-a-failed-soviet-venus-probe-in-earth-orbit/> - This article discusses the current status of the Kosmos 482 spacecraft, its orbital decay, and predictions regarding its re-entry. It also touches upon the challenges in predicting the exact re-entry date and location.
* <https://www.indiatoday.in/amp/science/story/venus-mission-vanera-kosmos-482-crash-earth-roscosmos-soviet-space-mission-nasa-1956041-2022-05-30> - This article provides an overview of the Kosmos 482 mission, its original objectives, and the current situation regarding its re-entry. It includes expert opinions on the likelihood of the spacecraft surviving re-entry and the potential impact zones.
* <https://www.phys.org/news/2019-03-soviet-venus-probe-kosmos-earth.html> - This article provides historical context on the Kosmos 482 mission, detailing its launch, intended mission to Venus, and the failure that resulted in the spacecraft remaining in Earth's orbit. It also discusses the current status of the spacecraft and its predicted re-entry.
* <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiuwFBVV95cUxQcWFVRWFoeHhPd2xhQldwdURwdVpVUzRRcFdtY0NHbkNkT1Y3QjhSYXBySFNqTUl4M0hoQXVyYTNxVm5KTy1OZDRqc193NFRjczVtU3NBb2NCSmg1LVJSWVU5dTVHdGpsR25GSVVxYm9QZGxOY0l6Nmk1LXZTXzZKalhzN1laSVgzVzdVWndvZXQ1Z0h3N2pRZ0luZzRXYTN5czktckZqaUNUamJKcjcyNFFzMUVqMUpTZmpB?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data