Evaluation Of Reentry Data Begins

National Aeronautics and Space Administration scientists have begun assessing the information radiated back from a spacecraft heat shield material test launched at Wallops Island early Tuesday morning, a Langley Research Center spokesman said Tuesday afternoon.

A reinforced resin plastic which both vaporizes and chars when subjected to the intense heat of air friction on reentry from space, the material is being considered for use on the Project Apollo vehicle which will carry American astronauts back to earth from the moon in a few years.

It was placed on a 320-pound payload launched at 2:06 a.m. on a Langley-managed Scout rocket which carried the spacecraft to an altitude of about 130 miles before the two upper stages and a 17-inch spherical rocket motor gave the payload an extra boost down into the atmosphere.

Reentry was at a speed of about 19,000 miles an hour. During a one-minute communications blackout caused by ionization of the air around the payload, the spokesman said, a tape recorder in the spacecraft stored temperature readings and ablation measurements gathered by thermocouples and sensors. After the reentry portion of the flight, the recorder relayed the data to ground stations at Wallops, Langley, Bermuda and sites at sea.

Total flight time was 11 minutes, and the spacecraft landed in the Atlantic Ocean about 12 miles from the predicted impact point about 1,200 miles downrange. There was no attempt to recover it, the spokesman said.