

# Elon Musks Starlink satellites fall to Earth and it is nerve-racking for Americans

The American Meteor Society received 36 reports of a fireball in the skies over four states. An expert says it was probably a Starlink satellite disintegrating in the atmosphere

A dazzling fireball that lit up the sky over four [US](#) states is thought to be caused by the fiery reentry of a SpaceX Starlink satellite.

Dozens of people reported seeing a [meteor](#) on Saturday, November 9, shortly after 10 PM Central Standard Time. The American Meteor Society received 36 reports about the bright fireball as it blazed a path over Colorado, Kansas, Texas, and Oklahoma. Most sightings were near Oklahoma City and the Dallas-Fort Worth area. However, contrary to popular belief, the unidentified aerial phenomenon wasn't a meteor at all.

In fact it is believed to have been a member of a [SpaceX](#) satellite fleet that launched in 2022.

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- SpaceX's Starlink-4682 spacecraft was part of a group of 54 satellites on the Starlink 4-23 mission that set off into **space** two years ago.



**A render of a SpaceX Starlink satellite in orbit** (Image: SpaceX)

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- Astronomer Jonathan McDowell from the Harvard–Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics believes that the bright object was probably a Starlink satellite disintegrating as it reentered Earth's atmosphere.

The Starlink spacecraft known as Starlink-4682 seems to have reentered the atmosphere, following a path over Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, and Oklahoma. Many people have reported seeing it, McDowell shared on X, formerly [Twitter](#), on November 10.

Witnesses described the fireball as it appeared to break up into smaller fiery pieces of debris in the sky.



**Witnesses described the fireball as it appeared to break up into smaller fiery pieces of debris in the sky** (Image: AMS/Jim Saueressig II of Burlington Kansas)

With the increasing number of Starlink reentries happening and SpaceX launching them every week, some astronomers and environmental scientists believe that the impact of these reentries is not fully understood and may be damaging Earth's atmosphere.

As satellites disintegrate in the atmosphere, they emit harmful aluminum oxide. This substance can hurt the ozone layer and change its sunlight reflection, which in turn affects the temperature of the upper atmosphere.

"If we don't do anything, we will see the impact globally within the next 10 years," Minkwan Kim, an associate professor of astronautics at the University of Southampton, told [Space.com](https://www.space.com).

Sometimes, when satellites reenter the atmosphere, they create fireballs that can be seen from the ground, but most of the time, people don't notice them. McDowell mentioned to Space.com that a Starlink satellite comes back into the atmosphere nearly every day.

"Sometimes multiple," McDowell said.