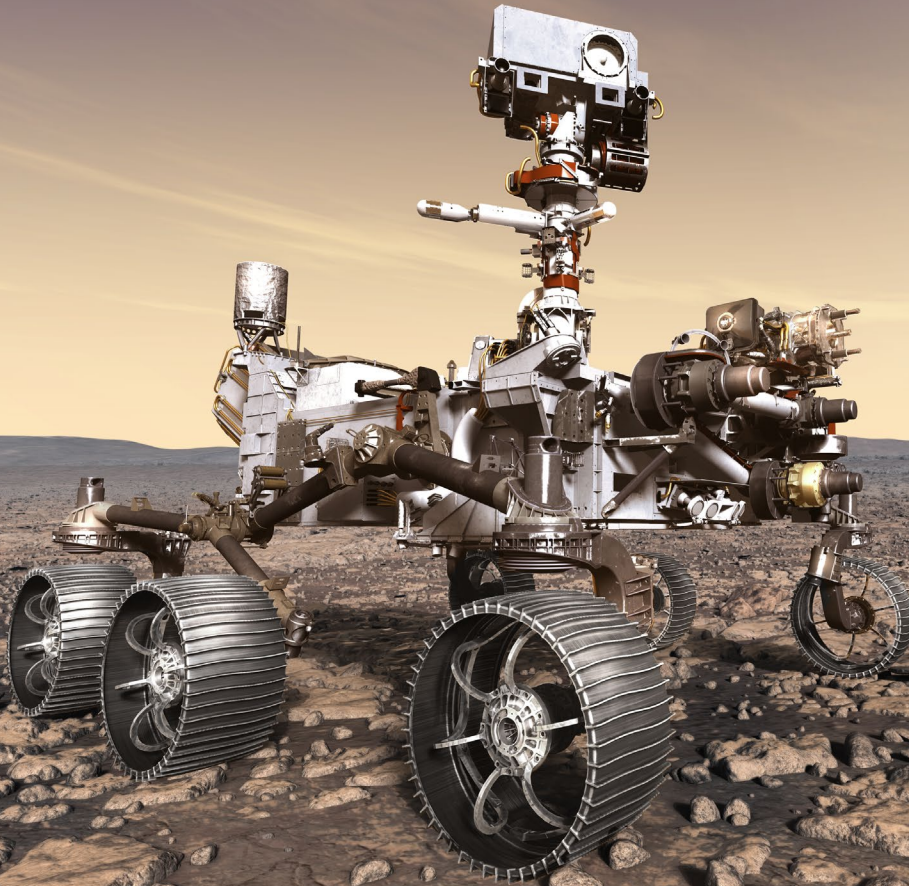


# Watch out for Static Electricity

Static electricity can be dangerous to rovers exploring other moons and planets.

Scientists and engineers building NASA's Mars 2020 rover took precautions to prevent static electricity.



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**Static electricity—caused by a charge imbalance when positive and negative charges are separated—can damage sensitive electronics.** Researchers building the rovers and landers that explore the solar system must be careful to minimize discharging static electricity. To do so, they often wear wrist straps that prevent static electricity from building up on their bodies. Static electricity can also be a problem after spacecraft have landed on a moon or planet. The Earth's moon, for instance, can become charged with static electricity after passing through clouds of particles emitted by the Sun. This charge imbalance can release sparks that can harm a spacecraft's electrical equipment.



Static electricity can cause moon dust to cling to spacesuits, equipment, and instruments, which was a problem for Apollo astronauts.