

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration has announced that it has signed an agreement with 3M for the latter to produce commercial products in space.

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3M wants to produce in space organic crystals and then chemical films which are difficult to produce on earth. Its first experiment could fly on a space shuttle in August and these could eventually lead to it manufacturing commercial products from the US space station which is due to be put into orbit in the early 1990s.

Other companies considering materials-processing in space are Honeywell which is interested in electronic circuits, John Deere (alloys) and Microgravity Research Associates (semiconductor production).

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