

Boeing prepares Delta IV Heavy rocket's launch

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The first launch of the super-sized Boeing Delta IV heavy-lift rocket is scheduled today from Cape Canaveral Air Station in Florida. It will help to determine whether the rocket can become a "heavy lift" vehicle to carry military satellites and, possibly, NASA's future manned spaceships.

The Delta IV family blends new and mature technology to launch virtually any size medium or heavy payload into space, with the largest success being the now flight proven RS-68 engine. The Delta IV is composed of five vehicle configurations based on a common booster core (CBC) first stage powered by the RS-68 engine. Delta IV second stages are derived from the Delta III second stage, using the same RL10B-2 engine, but with two sizes of expanded fuel and oxidizer tanks, depending on the model.

In designing the five Delta IV configurations, Boeing conducted extensive discussions with government and commercial customers concerning their present and future launch requirements. Proven technical features and processes were carried over from earlier Delta vehicles to Delta IV. New technologies and processes were incorporated where they added capability or reduced cost.

Today the Delta IV rocket will carry a 13,000-pound dummy satellite and then crash into the Atlantic Ocean.

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