

Final Preparations for Discovery Underway Despite Hurricane Dennis

July 9 2005



NASA weather officers are tracking Hurricane Dennis and its possible impact at Kennedy Space Center. Because the storm has ended its eastward drift and the primary track is slightly more to the west, it was decided this morning that Discovery will not be rolled back from the launch pad.

More than two years after the Columbia accident, NASA plans to return the Space Shuttle to flight next week.

Image: At the Shuttle Landing Facility on NASA's Kennedy Space Center, this new media building features a new Air Traffic Control Tower. The facility was dedicated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony July 8. Image credit:

NASA/KSC

Liftoff of Space Shuttle Discovery on NASA's Return to Flight Mission is scheduled for 3:51 p.m. EDT July 13. With launch only days remaining, final preparations continue at Kennedy Space Center's Launch Pad 39B. Countdown preparations have begun in firing room 3 of the Launch Control Center in anticipation of the countdown beginning on Sunday at 6 p.m. at the T-43 hour mark.

Stowing of the flight crew equipment lockers into the orbiter mid-deck is underway. The two seats on the flight deck are in place, and the remaining five seats will be installed in the mid-deck Monday.

With implementation of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board recommendations completed, a crew of seven astronauts will fly aboard Space Shuttle Discovery on mission STS-114 to test new safety techniques and deliver needed supplies to the International Space Station.

The mission will debut and test new External Tank designs and processes that will minimize potentially damaging debris during launch. New ground and flight camera systems will observe the Shuttle environment during launch and on orbit. Also, new techniques for in-flight inspections and repair of the Shuttle Thermal Protection System will be tested.

Several elements will be carried in Discovery's payload bay for delivery to the Station. These include the Multi-Purpose Logistics Module Raffaello, containing racks of supplies, food and water, and the Human Research Facility-2 rack. Also, the External Stowage Platform and a replacement Control Moment Gyroscope will be carried in Discovery's payload bay.

During Mission STS-114, mission specialists will perform spacewalks to install the External Stowage Platform and the Control Moment Gyroscope onto the Station. They will unberth the logistics module and attach it to the Station to transfer several tons of supplies and equipment, including food and water, for use by the Expedition 11 crew.

Mission STS-114 signifies the beginning of a new era in human exploration. Safely returning Space Shuttles to flight to complete the International Space Station are the first steps in the Vision for Space Exploration.

Source: NASA

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