

NASA plans for an emergency space rescue

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NASA scientists reportedly are ready with a plan called "Safe Haven" should the Discovery shuttle set for launch Wednesday experience a major problem.

The plan developed by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration would involve the first-ever attempt to rescue astronauts marooned in space.

In an unprecedented move, the seven-member shuttle Atlantis' crew has been training simultaneously for two missions: their 11-day planned flight to the International Space Station in September and for an emergency rescue flight by four of the seven astronauts.

"We have this plan, which we hope we don't even remotely have to think about executing, to put a crew on the station and send a rescue crew up," Wayne Hale, the shuttle program's deputy manager told the Miami Herald. "Our primary concern is keeping the crew safe and bringing them back in a good orbiter."

Should such a science-fiction rescue become necessary, it would obviously involve extremely high adventure.

"It would be dramatic," U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., told the newspaper. Nelson, who flew aboard shuttle Columbia in 1985, added, "It would be on Page One."

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