

ISS Exp 12 moved Soyuz spacecraft

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Expedition 12 Commander Bill McArthur and Flight Engineer Valery Tokarev took a short ride around the International Space Station today, flying their Soyuz spacecraft from one docking port to another.

Image: Expedition 12 relocates the Soyuz TMA-7 spacecraft as the International Space Station orbits above the Sahara Desert. Credit: NASA TV

The crew left the station unoccupied for approximately 30 minutes, as they relocated the Soyuz. Tokarev undocked the spacecraft at 3:46 a.m. EST, while the station orbited 225 miles above the Atlantic, and docked to the nearby Zarya module at 4:05 a.m. EST.

The Soyuz move freed the Pirs Docking Compartment airlock for an upcoming spacewalk. The Soyuz is the crew's ride home at the end of their six-month stay on the station. It also serves as a lifeboat.

The crew must finish unpacking the Progress cargo spacecraft docked to the complex, prepare it for undocking and get ready for the Dec. 23 arrival of the next supply ship. McArthur spent several hours photographing samples of colloids that had been undisturbed in the station's microgravity environment for more than a year. The work is part of an experiment called the Binary Colloidal Alloy Test. The behavior of these supercritical fluids is important because they combine the properties of liquids and gases. A better understanding of their reaction in the weightless environment of space could help in the development of new drugs, cleaner power and interplanetary transportation.

Source: NASA

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