

Discovery to move to its launch pad

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Workers accompany the orbiter Discovery as it moves away from NASA's Orbiter Processing Facility toward the Vehicle Assembly Building (VAB) atop an orbiter transporter. Image credit: NASA/KSC

The space shuttle Discovery will be moved to Launch Pad 39B at NASA's Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral, Fla., Friday, beginning at 2 a.m.

Discovery was attached to its propulsion elements -- an external fuel tank and twin solid rocket boosters -- in the Vehicle Assembly Building on May 13.

Following those operations, final integration, preparations and closeouts began in preparation for flight.

The rollout is an important step before Discovery's next mission, STS-121, to the International Space Station. Discovery's launch is targeted for July 1 during a launch window that extends to July 19.

During its 12-day mission, Discovery's crew will test new hardware and techniques to improve shuttle safety, as well as deliver supplies and make repairs to the station.

NASA TV will provide online live coverage beginning at 6 a.m. EDT Friday as Discovery approaches the launch pad.

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