

It's Official: Discovery is Go for Launch on Dec. 7

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The rotating service structure is in place around Space Shuttle Discovery at Launch Pad 39B, leaving only the top of the external tank and boosters visible. Image Credit: NASA

NASA senior managers have wrapped up the two-day flight readiness review at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida. At a press conference immediately following the review, William Gerstenmaier, NASA Associate Administrator for Space Operations, announced Dec. 7 as the launch date for the STS-116 mission to the International Space Station.

Gerstenmaier was joined at the briefing by Space Shuttle Program Manager Wayne Hale and Launch Director Mike Leinbach. Hale pointed out that the launch team had been asked to aim for a launch on Dec. 7

rather than the original target date of Dec. 14.

"I am as proud of the team as I could be for advancing the date, but even more proud of them for doing the work properly and making sure we are safe," Hale commented.

"From the processing perspective we feel really, really good about Dec. 7," Leinbach agreed.

The Shuttle Mission Management Team conducts the review two weeks prior to the opening of the launch window for each space shuttle mission. The group thoroughly evaluates all activities and elements necessary for the safe and successful performance of shuttle mission operations -- from the prelaunch phase through post-landing -- including the readiness of the vehicle, flight crew and payloads.

The launch window for the STS-116 mission opens on Dec. 7 and extends through Dec. 17. The seven-member flight crew will arrive for launch at Kennedy's Shuttle Landing Facility the afternoon of Dec. 3. Primary payloads on the 12-day mission are the P5 integrated truss segment, SPACEHAB single logistics module and an integrated cargo carrier. The STS-116 mission will be the 20th flight to the station.

Source: NASA

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