

Space shuttle launch rescheduled

January 29 2007

NASA says the launch of Space Shuttle Atlantis to the International Space Station on mission STS-117 will occur March 15 -- one day earlier than planned.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration officials at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida said the orbiter is scheduled to move to the Vehicle Assembly Building Feb. 7 for mating with the external tank and solid rocket boosters.

NASA said the canister that holds the space station's S3/S4 solar arrays has been "fit tested" and is to be transported to the pad Feb. 18.

The crew of that shuttle flight -- STS-117 -- will continue constructing the space station, installing a new truss segment, retracting a set of existing solar arrays and unfolding a new set on the starboard side of the station.

The team will be commanded by Frederick Sturckow, a veteran of two shuttle missions, while Lee Archambault will be making his first flight as the shuttle's pilot. Astronauts James Reilly and Patrick Forrester will be returning to the station, with Steven Swanson and John Olivas making their first flight into space.

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