

# NASA Aims for 4 Shuttle Flights in 2007

April 17 2007

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NASA has announced a revised launch schedule for the upcoming Space Shuttle missions. The revised schedule follows a review of repairs to the insulation on the Shuttle's external fuel tank, which was damaged during a sudden hail storm over NASA's Florida launch site in February.

Repairs to the external fuel tank are expected to be ready for the launch of Space Shuttle Atlantis on the STS-117 mission no earlier than 8 June 2007. The launch window for STS-117 extends to 18 July 2007.

The STS-118 mission - the second Space Shuttle flight of the year - is due to follow during a launch window that opens on 9 August 2007.

Originally scheduled for August, the STS-120 mission with ESA astronaut Paolo Nespoli, which will also carry the Italian-built Node 2 connecting module into orbit, is now targeted for 20 October 2007.

Flight STS-122, which will see the launch of the Columbus laboratory, one of Europe's major contributions to the International Space Station, is now due for launch from NASA's Kennedy Space Centre on 6 December 2007. The crew of the STS-122 mission includes ESA astronauts Hans Schlegel and Leopold Eyharts.

Flights beyond April 2008 have not been assessed. Both shuttle and station program officials will continue to consider options for the remainder of the shuttle flights and those target launch dates are subject to change.

Upcoming shuttle missions:

- STS-117 targeted for no earlier than June 8, 2007, on Atlantis
- STS-118 targeted for no earlier than Aug. 9, 2007, on Endeavour
- STS-120 targeted for no earlier than Oct. 20, 2007, on Discovery instead of Atlantis
- STS-122 targeted for no earlier than Dec. 6, 2007, on Atlantis instead of Discovery
- STS-123 targeted for no earlier than Feb. 14, 2008, on Endeavour
- STS-124 targeted for no earlier than April 24, 2008, on Discovery instead of Atlantis

Source: NASA

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