

Astronauts Move Carts, Upgrade Communications System; Spacewalk Continues

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Expedition 15 Flight Engineer Clay Anderson holds a Crew Equipment Translation Aid cart as he rides on the end of the International Space Station's robotic arm during STS-118's third spacewalk. Image: NASA TV

Astronauts Rick Mastracchio and Clay Anderson are rolling through their scheduled activities as they work outside the International Space Station.

They continued preparations for the relocation of the Port 6 (P6) truss and its solar arrays by moving two Crew Equipment Translation Aid carts along the Integrated Truss Structure rail system. This will allow the station's arm to perform the P6 relocation work during STS-120. The P6

will be moved from atop the station to the end of the Port 5 truss.

Early in the spacewalk, the duo relocated an antenna from the Port 6 (P6) to the Port 1 (P1) truss. In addition to the antenna relocation, the spacewalkers installed a new transponder and signal processor in an S-band communications system upgrade.

Before the excursion ends, Mastracchio and Anderson will retrieve two materials science experiments from the station's exterior. The experiments were deployed in August 2006 and will be returned to Earth for analysis. Since the spacewalkers are ahead of the timeline, flight controllers may give them approval to tackle some get-ahead tasks.

Today's spacewalk is Mastracchio's third of the mission. Anderson, who arrived at the station in June, conducted his first spacewalk on July 23 with Expedition 15 Commander Fyodor Yurchikhin.

Mission Specialist Tracy Caldwell is the spacewalk coordinator and Pilot Charles Hobaugh is at the controls of the station's robotic arm.

The spacewalk is slated to end at 5:07 p.m.

Mission managers have determined that damage to a small section of Endeavour's heat shield poses no threat to crew safety or mission operations. However, they are discussing options for possible repair work that would ensure preparations on the ground for Endeavour's next flight will go more smoothly. The damage occurred during the climb to orbit on Aug. 8.

Source: NASA

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