

Space Shuttle Discovery 'Go' For Oct. 23 Launch

October 17 2007



Discovery stands bathed in sunlight at its seaside launch pad on the day it rolled out from the Vehicle Assembly Building. Since then, it has been enclosed by the rotating service structure as launch preparations continue. Image credit: NASA/George Shelton

NASA senior managers Tuesday completed a detailed review of space shuttle Discovery's readiness for flight and selected Oct. 23 as the official launch date. Commander Pam Melroy and her six crewmates are scheduled to lift off at 11:38 a.m. EDT on the STS-120 mission to the International Space Station.

Tuesday's meeting included a discussion about concerns raised by the NASA Engineering and Safety Center regarding the reinforced carbon carbon on three of Discovery's wing leading edge panels. This issue initially was brought before the Space Shuttle Program during a two-day, preliminary review held last week to assess preparations for Discovery's mission.

"After a thorough discussion and review of all current engineering analysis, we have determined that Discovery's panels do not need to be replaced before the mission," said Associate Administrator for Space Operations Bill Gerstenmaier.

The 14-day mission includes five spacewalks – four by shuttle crew members and one by the station's Expedition 16 crew. Discovery is expected to complete its mission and return home at 4:47 a.m. EST on Nov. 6.

Source: NASA

Citation: Space Shuttle Discovery 'Go' For Oct. 23 Launch (2007, October 17) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2007-10-space-shuttle-discovery-oct.html>

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