

Expedition 22 Crew to Return From Station Thursday

March 17 2010



Expedition 22 Commander Jeff Williams (right) shakes hands with Expedition 22 Flight Engineer/Expedition 23 Commander Oleg Kotov while Flight Engineers Maxim Suraev (obscured behind Kotov), Soichi Noguchi and T.J. Creamer look on during the change of command ceremony Wednesday aboard the International Space Station. Credit: NASA TV

The crew aboard the International Space Station conducted a change of command ceremony Wednesday as Expedition 22 comes to a close and two crew members prepare for an early Thursday return home.

In a brief ceremony at 8:45 a.m. EDT, [Expedition](#) 22 Commander Jeff Williams thanked the international ground teams and his fellow crewmates, Flight Engineers Maxim Suraev, Oleg Kotov, Soichi Noguchi, and T.J. Creamer, before handing over command of the station

to Kotov, who will lead Expedition 23 when Williams and Suraev depart.

Afterwards, the crew wrapped up the day's activities and headed off to bed for a 10-hour sleep period beginning at 10 a.m. to rest up for a busy night of departure work.

Williams and Suraev will bid their final farewells Wednesday at 11:40 p.m. as they climb aboard their Soyuz TMA-16 spacecraft and close the hatches. Undocking is expected to take place around 4 a.m. Thursday, leading to a 7:23 a.m. landing in the steppes of Kazakhstan.

With frigid weather and gusty winds predicted to greet Williams and Suraev at the landing site, Russian and NASA personnel are staying overnight in nearby Arkalyk to assure a swift recovery of the [crew](#). Weather permitting, four additional helicopters will depart from Kustanai Thursday and refuel in Arkalyk en route to the [landing](#) site to assist with the recovery.

Provided by JPL/NASA

Citation: Expedition 22 Crew to Return From Station Thursday (2010, March 17) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-03-crew-station-thursday.html>

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