

Canadian to command space station in 2013

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Canadian Astronaut Chris Hadfield checks out equipment on the space shuttle Endeavour in 2001. Hadfield in 2013 will become the first Canadian to command the International Space Station (ISS), the Canadian Space Agency announced Thursday.

Astronaut Chris Hadfield in 2013 will become the first Canadian to command the International Space Station (ISS), the Canadian Space Agency announced Thursday.

Hadfield, 51, will rocket on his third trip into space aboard a [Russian Soyuz spacecraft](#) in December 2012 and assume command of the station during the second part of a six-month mission.

Over the first four months, as an ISS flight engineer, Hadfield will carry

out scientific experiments, robotics tasks and technology demonstrations, the [Canadian Space Agency](#) said in a statement.

As well, the veteran space-walker may be called upon to step out into space to perform tasks around the station.

As ISS commander, Hadfield will be responsible for the crew's safety, ISS ongoing operations, maintenance and equipment, while ensuring that scientific experiments are carried out.

He may also be called on to perform assembly and maintenance tasks on the ISS, and to grapple and berth spacecraft to the station using the robotic Canadarm-2.

Hadfield was, in 2001, the first Canadian to perform a [spacewalk](#) and in 1995 became the only Canadian to board the Russian space station Mir.

Construction of the ISS started in 1998 and now orbits the Earth from a distance of 350 kilometers, circling the planet every 90 minutes at a speed of 28,000 kilometers per hour.

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