

SpaceX Falcon 9 Set for Critical Engine Test Firing on Monday, April 30

April 30 2012



The SpaceX Dragon spacecraft rests on top of the Falcon 9 rocket at SpaceX's launch site in Cape Canaveral, FL. The Falcon 9 launch is targeted for May 7. Credit: SpaxeX

On Monday, April 30, SpaceX (Space Exploration Technologies) is all set to conduct a critical static engine test fire of the Falcon 9 rocket at the firm's launch pad on Cape Canaveral, Florida.

If all goes well, [SpaceX](#) and NASA are targeting a May 7 liftoff of the rocket and Dragon spacecraft at 9:38 AM, bound for the International

Space Station (ISS). This [launch](#) signifies the first time that a commercial company is attempting to dock at the ISS.

The Falcon 9 rocket with the Dragon bolted on top was rolled out to the pad at Space Launch Complex 40 (SLC-40) on the transporter-erector on Sunday morning (April 29), SpaceX spokesperson Kirstin Grantham told Universe Today.

“The Falcon 9 is vertical. Fueling begins Monday,” said Grantham.

On Sunday night, SpaceX CEO Elon Musk tweeted: “Dragon review completed. All systems now ready for full thrust hold down firing on Monday.”

Today the 157 foot long rocket was moved about 600 feet on rail tracks from the processing hanger to Pad 40 in anticipation of the engine test firing.

During the hotfire test, all nine of the powerful liquid fueled Merlin 1C first stage engines will be ignited at full power for two seconds as part of a full launch dress rehearsal for the flight, dubbed COTS 2. SpaceX engineers will run through all launch procedures on Monday as though this were an actual launch on launch day.

This is the second Falcon 9 launch for NASA as part of the agency’s Commercial Orbital Transportation Services program designed to enable commercial firms to deliver cargo to the ISS following the retirement of NASA’s fleet of Space Shuttles. The first [Falcon](#) 9 COTS test flight took place in December 2010.

You can watch a live webcast of the engine test at www.spacex.com starting at 2:30 PM ET/ 11:30 AM PT, with the actual static fire targeted for 3:00 PM ET/ 12:00 PM PT according to SpaceX.

SpaceX is under contract to NASA to conduct twelve resupply missions to the ISS to carry cargo back and forth for a cost of some \$1.6 Billion.

Provided by [Universe Today](#)

Citation: SpaceX Falcon 9 Set for Critical Engine Test Firing on Monday, April 30 (2012, April 30) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-04-spacex-falcon-critical-monday-april.html>

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