

Canadian commands space station for first time

March 13 2013



Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield speaks with a journalist at the Cosmonaut Training Centre in Star City, outside Moscow, on November 28, 2012. Hadfield became the first Canadian to assume command of the International Space Station.

With the ringing of a ceremonial bell in space to mark a crew change, astronaut Chris Hadfield became the first Canadian to assume command

of the International Space Station on Wednesday.

The [Canadian Space Agency](#) called it "a historic milestone for our country."

Hadfield said in a Twitter message that outgoing Expedition 34 commander Kevin Ford of NASA handed him the "keys" to the spaceship, marking the start of the Hadfield-led Expedition 35.

The two men also shook hands and gave short speeches, and Ford offered Hadfield a few gifts.

A fan back on Earth, meanwhile, offered Hadfield this advice in a Twitter message: "Don't lock your keys inside the spaceship. You'd have to break into the ship and everyone would think you were stealing it."

Hadfield, 53, rocketed into space in December on a 147-day mission. It was his third trip into space and his second to the ISS.

He took the helm of the ISS—which orbits the Earth from a distance of 350 kilometers (217 miles), circling the planet every 90 minutes at a speed of 28,000 kilometers per hour—as three astronauts from the previous mission departed for home.

As ISS commander, Hadfield will oversee the station's operations, including over 100 [scientific experiments](#), and be responsible for the safety of the crew and the station.

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