

# Crew access tower stacking at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station begins

September 17 2015, by Steven Siceloff

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The first new Crew Access Tower at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida since the Apollo era will take shape at Space Launch Complex-41 in the coming days as workers moved the first two tiers

from a nearby construction yard to the pad surface. The tiers will be lifted into place atop each other at the foot of the launch pad starting next week.

Boeing and United Launch Alliance are building the [tower](#) which is a critical element for the [launch pad](#) as it is converted from a pad that serves only uncrewed missions to a complex that can safely accommodate the needs of flight crews along with their ground support teams for CST-100 Starliner missions. The Starliner is under development in partnership with NASA's Commercial Crew Program, along with the SpaceX Crew Dragon, to take astronauts to the International Space Station from Florida's Space Coast.

Designed with modern data systems, communications and power networks integrated and protected from blast and vibration, plus an elevator, the Crew Access Tower has been built with several features only a fully suited astronaut could appreciate, such as wider walkways, snag-free railings and corners that are easy to navigate without running into someone. The tower will also be equipped with slide wire baskets for emergency evacuation to a staged blast-resistant vehicle.

The segments were assembled about four miles away from the launch pad so workers wouldn't be idled by launch preps for United Launch Alliance Atlas V rockets. The tower will be stacked just to the side of the hard stand at SLC-41 where the boosters lift off. It will take seven tiers to complete the more than 200-foot-tall tower. A swing-out walkway bridge will be added later to connect the tower to the hatch of the Starliner so astronauts can climb aboard the ship as it stands at the pad before launch.

The tower construction marks the latest in a quick succession of events for Boeing's Starliner program. The company opened the Commercial Crew and Cargo Processing Facility last week for use as the Starliner

production and processing base and just completed the mural on the front of the building showing the spacecraft orbiting above Florida. The upper and lower dome assemblies arrived earlier this year for the Starliner's Structural Test Article which is being built and processed as a pathfinder for the program and will be put together just as an operational spacecraft would before it goes into exhaustive testing to prove the design.





Provided by NASA

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