Space station crew to relocate Soyuz to make room for new crewmates

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The Soyuz MS-17 crew ship that carried the Expedition 64 crew to the International Space Station on Oct. 14, 2020, is pictured Oct. 18, 2020, docked to the Rassvet module. The orbital complex was above the Atlantic Ocean in between the island nation of Cape Verde and the African nation of Mauritania. Credit: NASA

Three residents of the International Space Station will take a spin around their orbital neighborhood in the Soyuz MS-17 on Friday, March 19, relocating the spacecraft to prepare for the arrival of the next set of crew members. Live coverage on NASA Television, the NASA app, and the agency's website will begin at 12:15 p.m. EDT.

Expedition 64 Flight Engineer Kate Rubins of NASA and Commander Sergey Ryzhikov and Sergey Kud-Sverchkov, both of the Russian Space Agency Roscosmos, will undock from the Earth-facing port of the station's Rassvet module at 12:38 p.m. and dock again at the space-facing Poisk docking port at 1:07 p.m.

The relocation will free up the Rassvet port for the docking of another Soyuz vehicle, designated Soyuz MS-18, which will carry three Expedition 65 crew members to the station next month. NASA's Mark Vande Hei and Roscosmos' Oleg Novitsky and Pyotr Dubrov are scheduled to launch to the station Friday, April 9, from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

This will be the 15th overall Soyuz port relocation and the first since August 2019.

Rubins, Ryzhikov, and Kud-Sverchkov will return to Earth April 17 in the Soyuz MS-17 that carried them to the space station in October 2020.

Provided by NASA