

SpaceX aims for 3rd crew launch hour before Friday's sunrise

April 22 2021, by Marcia Dunn



In this Wednesday, April 21, 2021 photo provided by NASA, a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket with the company's Crew Dragon spacecraft onboard sits on the launch pad at Launch Complex 39A at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., at sunset. NASA astronauts Shane Kimbrough and Megan McArthur, European Space Agency astronaut Thomas Pesquet, and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency astronaut Akihiko Hoshide are scheduled for a Friday launch. (NASA/Joel Kowsky)

SpaceX aimed to launch its third crew a little before sunrise Friday, this time using a recycled capsule and rocket.

The four astronauts, representing the U.S., Japan and France, were supposed to fly to the [International Space Station](#) on Thursday. But liftoff was delayed because of [poor weather](#) offshore.

SpaceX's Dragon capsule requires calm waves and winds in case an emergency splashdown is needed during the climb to orbit. Friday's forecast should be much improved, officials said. Liftoff was set for 5:49 a.m. EDT.

"Our friends on the @Space_Station are expecting us to show up and we don't want to be late," tweeted French astronaut Thomas Pesquet. "They even installed my bedroom recently and literally made my bed . Such nice hosts!"

For the first time, [Elon Musk's company](#) is launching astronauts with a previously flown capsule and rocket, just as it's done for station supply runs. This crew capsule launched with SpaceX's first crew last May, and the rocket hoisted the second crew in November.

NASA's spacecraft commander Shane Kimbrough and his crew will spend six months at the [space station](#), replacing four astronauts who will return next Wednesday in their own SpaceX capsule, parachuting into the Gulf of Mexico near Tallahassee, Florida.

To celebrate Earth Day on Thursday, Kimbrough tweeted a sunrise beach shot from NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

"Amazing way to appreciate our planet this morning!" he said.

Besides Kimbrough and Pesquet, the crew includes NASA's Megan

McArthur and Japan's Akihiko Hoshide.

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