

High wind delays SpaceX crew homecoming after 6 months aloft

November 8 2021, by Marcia Dunn



From front left, European Space Agency astronaut Thomas Pesquet, NASA astronaut Megan McArthur, NASA astronaut Shane Kimbrough and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency astronaut Akihiko Hoshide leave the Operation and Checkout Building at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., Friday, April 23, 2021. High wind off the Florida coast has prompted SpaceX to delay the return of four space station astronauts. They were supposed to leave the International Space Station on Sunday, Nov. 7, 2021 with their capsule splashing down in the Gulf of Mexico on Monday morning. Credit: AP Photo/John Raoux, file

High wind off the Florida coast has prompted SpaceX to delay the return of four space station astronauts in orbit since spring.

The U.S., French and Japanese astronauts were supposed to leave the International Space Station on Sunday, with their capsule splashing down in the Gulf of Mexico on Monday morning. But with gusts exceeding safety limits, SpaceX bumped the departure to Monday afternoon, with a nighttime return to conclude their six-month mission.

The good news is that their trip home will now last eight hours, less than half as long as before. The toilet in their capsule is broken, and so the four will need to rely on diapers while flying home.

SpaceX still is aiming for a Wednesday night launch, at the earliest, of their replacements. This flight also has been delayed by [bad weather](#), as well as an astronaut's undisclosed medical issue. The issue, described as minor, should be resolved by launch time, officials said.

Last week, SpaceX and NASA flipped the order of the launch and landing because of the deteriorating weather and the looming deadline to get the capsule back from the space station. SpaceX capsules are certified for a maximum 210 days in orbit, and the one up there now is approaching 200 days.

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Citation: High wind delays SpaceX crew homecoming after 6 months aloft (2021, November 8) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2021-11-high-spacex-crew-homecoming-months.html>

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