

Boeing astronaut flight off until next year for more fixes

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A United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket with Boeing's CST-100 Starliner spacecraft is rolled out of the Vertical Integration Facility to the launch pad at Space Launch Complex 41 ahead of the Orbital Flight Test-2 (OFT-2) mission, Wednesday, May 18, 2022 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida. On Thursday, Aug. 25, 2022, officials announced Boeing's first spaceflight with astronauts has been delayed until 2022 because of repairs that need to be made to the capsule following its last test flight. Credit: Joel Kowsky/NASA via AP, File

Boeing's first spaceflight with astronauts has been delayed until next year because of repairs that need to be made to the capsule following its last test flight.

Liftoff of the Starliner capsule with a pair of NASA test pilots is now scheduled for February, officials announced Thursday. They had hoped to launch it by year's end.

Boeing has launched Starliner twice without a crew, [most recently in May](#). The capsule managed to dock with the International Space Station on the second go-around, despite thruster and other problems. Boeing program manager Mark Nappi said these issues need to be fixed before two NASA astronauts climb aboard, as early as February.

Some of the thruster trouble is believed to have been caused by debris. Because that part of the capsule was ditched before touchdown, "we will never know exactly what was the issue," Nappi told reporters.

Boeing already was trailing SpaceX, NASA's other contracted [taxi service](#), by the time the Starliner made its debut in 2019. The [capsule's](#) initial test flight with a mannequin was cut short by a string of software problems, prompting this year's do-over.

SpaceX is gearing up for its sixth crew flight for NASA. Liftoff has been bumped to the beginning of October because of all the traffic at the [space station](#).

NASA's space station program manager, Joel Montalbano, said Boeing will have priority in February.

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