

SpaceX Falcon Heavy launch on hold for now, weather delays Falcon 9 attempt too

December 14 2023, by Richard Tribou, Orlando Sentinel



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

SpaceX is standing down from attempting to launch its powerhouse Falcon Heavy for now citing the need for "systems checkouts" while weather would have been an issue the next couple of days, and has already delayed a Falcon 9 launch as well.

After already delaying a Sunday attempt to launch Falcon Heavy from Kennedy Space Center's Launch Pad 39-A because of [weather](#) and then scrubbing a Monday night attempt less than an hour before its planned liftoff because of a "ground side issue," SpaceX had announced it would try again Wednesday.

But late Tuesday, it called off those plans.

"We are standing down from tomorrow's Falcon Heavy launch of USSF-52 to perform additional system checkouts," the company posted to X. "The payload remains healthy while teams work toward the next best launch opportunity. We're also keeping an eye on the weather and will announce a new launch date once confirmed with the Range."

USF-52 is a mission to send up the Space Force's secretive mini shuttle, the X-37B Orbital Test Vehicle built by Boeing, on what would be the spacecraft's seventh trip to orbit. The classified missions have sent it on longer and longer duration flights each time, having spent nearly 909 days in [space](#) the last time around.

Weather was also the reason it called off both a late Tuesday attempt and a planned Wednesday attempt to launch a Falcon 9 from nearby Cape Canaveral Space Force Station's Space Launch Complex 40 on another Starlink mission.

SpaceX held off naming a new launch date for that mission either as weather is not looking good into the weekend.

If and when both rockets do launch, they would be the 69th and 70th from the Space Coast for the year, all but four of which have been by SpaceX.

United Launch Alliance, which flew three of those, had been targeting a

fourth before the end of the year with its new Vulcan Centaur rocket. Its [window](#) from Dec. 24–26, though, was likely taken off the board, according to ULA President and CEO Tory Bruno, after delays in a wet dress rehearsal of the rocket.

ULA rolled its rocket back to the [launch pad](#) on Monday and attempted a second time for a full wet dress rehearsal, but the results of that have yet to be announced.

Bruno had already said the [launch](#) was likely pushing to a four-day window that opens Jan.8, 2024.

2023 Orlando Sentinel. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: SpaceX Falcon Heavy launch on hold for now, weather delays Falcon 9 attempt too (2023, December 14) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-12-spacex-falcon-heavy-weather-delays.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--