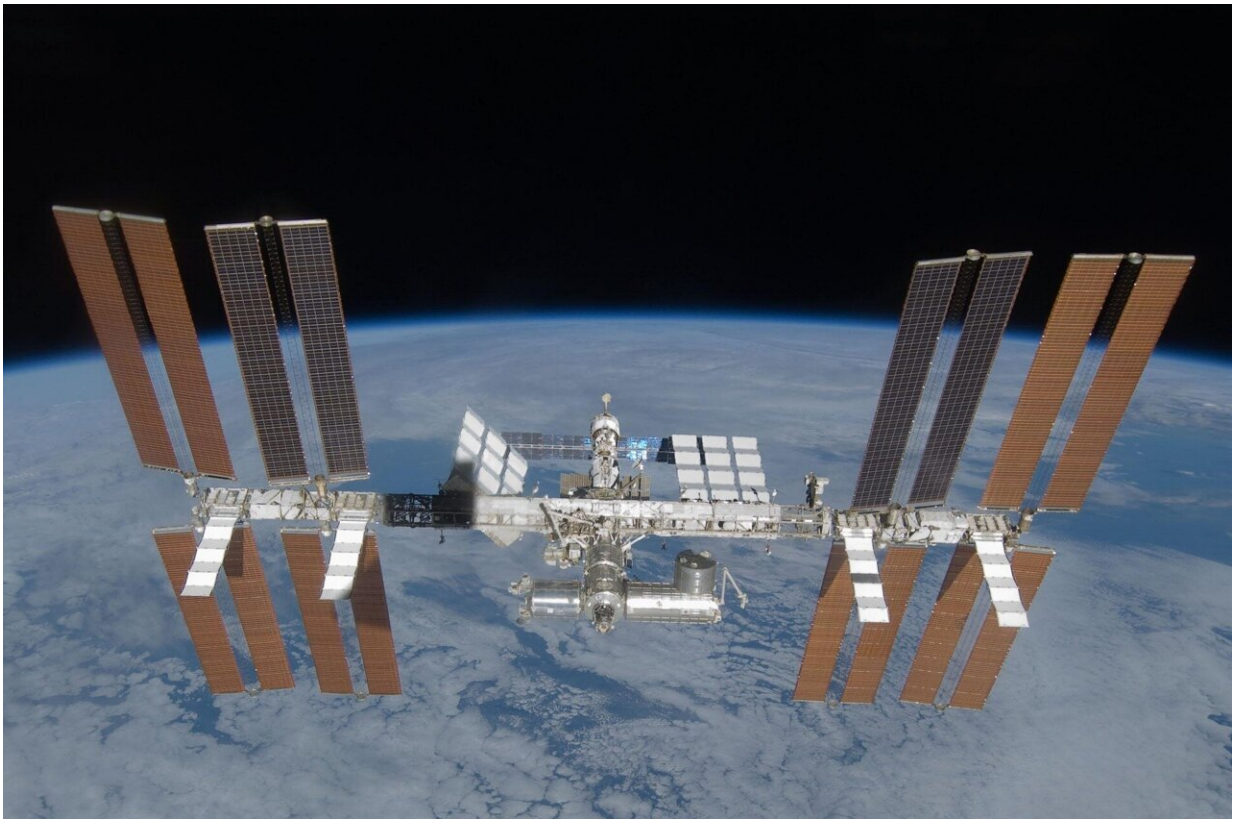


NASA does Dragon shuffle prepping for Starliner launch

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Parking is at a premium at the International Space Station, but NASA and SpaceX cleared out one spot as a cargo Dragon spacecraft completed its trip home with a splashdown off the Florida coast.

NASA still needs to shift the remaining Dragon spacecraft from its spot to clear the path for next week's launch of Boeing's CST-100 Starliner.

The cargo Dragon from the CRS-30 resupply mission that arrived in March was attached to the ISS for more than 36 days. It returned for a 1:38 a.m. splashdown off Tampa, carrying more than 4,100 pounds of science experiments and other supplies back to Earth.

It departed the ISS Harmony module, which has two docking ports, on Sunday.

But now NASA wants the four members of Crew-8 to perform valet duties. They will climb aboard the Crew Dragon Endeavour that remains docked at Harmony's forward port, and fly it around and redock to the open port, called the zenith port.

NASA's Matthew Dominick, Michael Barratt and Jeanette Epps along with Roscosmos' Alexander Grebenkin will take the short road trip at 7:45 a.m. Thursday and be back attached to the ISS at 8:28 a.m.

That will leave the forward port open for the arrival of the first crewed flight of Starliner bringing up NASA's Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams on the Crew Flight Test slated to launch from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station's Space Launch Complex 41 atop an Atlas V rocket on Monday at 10:34 p.m.

They are set to arrive on the Starliner on Wednesday, May 8, at 1:11 a.m. for about an eight-day stay on board temporarily increasing the ISS population to nine. Williams and Wilmore will return in Starliner, landing in the western U.S.

"We've intentionally cleared our [flight plan](#), our vehicle traffic and our schedule so that we've got a really large window to accommodate the

CFT mission," said NASA's ISS program manager Dana Weigel. "So if for whatever reason we need more time for the mission, whether that's in the run-up to launch or on board, there's no issue at all accommodating a longer mission duration."

Boeing is attempting to have its spacecraft certified to join SpaceX's Crew Dragon fleet for regular rotational missions of astronauts as early as next February. For now, SpaceX continues to perform rotation duties with Crew-8 staying on board until Crew-9's arrival as early as August.

"We're very much looking forward to having Butch and Suni onboard soon," Weigel. said. "Our team is ready to support this historic test flight."

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