

Russia delays commercial space launches after crash

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Russia will have to delay the upcoming launch of six US satellites and two commercial European craft due to last month's Soyuz carrier rocket mishap, Russian industry sources said Tuesday.

The launch of six Globalstar mobile [communications satellites](#) from the Baikonur space centre in Kazakhstan will have to be pushed back from October to December, Interfax quoted a Russian space official as saying.

The Soyuz accident will also require the recall of two of the four rocket carriers that are being prepared for launches at Kourou, French Guiana, where Russia has been working with the [European Space Agency](#) (ESA) under a 2003 accord, another source said.

The delays will not affect the launch of a Soyuz-ST rocket from French Guiana that has been scheduled for October 20 because that mission uses a slightly different modification of the carrier craft, the Russian official said.

A Soyuz-U rocket carrying an unmanned cargo ship to the [International Space Station](#) failed to reach orbit on August 24, prompting Russia to ground its manned flight programme until the causes of the accident are found.

Russia is the only country capable of sending [manned missions](#) into space, but the accident has also affected the country's lucrative commercial satellite launch programme.

Space officials last week blamed the accident on a one-off production fault in a rocket engine. But they did not name the date of the next manned Soyuz [space launch](#) and only requested time for more fine-tuning and checks.

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