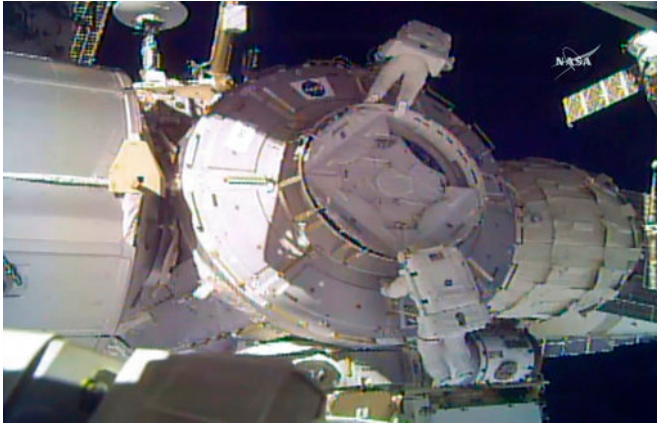


The Latest: Spacewalking astronauts salvage job, back inside (Update)

30 March 2017



In this image made from video provided by NASA, U.S. astronauts Peggy Whitson, above, and Shane Kimbrough work on the outside of the International Space Station on Thursday, March 30, 2017. An important piece of micrometeorite shielding was lost during the spacewalk. (NASA via AP)

The Latest on a spacewalk at the International Space Station (all times local):

2:33 p.m.

Two astronauts are back inside following a spacewalk that took an unintended turn when a piece of equipment got away.

Peggy Whitson and Shane Kimbrough (KIM-broh) lost a vital cloth shield for the International Space Station midway through their spacewalk Thursday. Mission Control quickly came up with a plan for a patch, which worked. NASA says the lost shield—essentially 18 pounds of fabric—poses no threat to the orbiting complex.

Whitson now holds the record for the most spacewalks by a woman—eight—and the most accumulated spacewalking time for a woman—around 53 hours.

Thursday's spacewalk lasted seven hours.

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11:55 a.m.

NASA says there is no chance the International Space Station will be struck by a piece of thermal shielding that got away from spacewalking astronauts.

The cloth bundle floated away Thursday midway through a spacewalk by Peggy Whitson and Shane Kimbrough (KIM-broh). Whitson immediately reported the mishap to Mission Control, which tracked the item as it drifted away. Nearly two hours later, the shield was seen as a white speck in the distance. Mission Control said there was no risk of it hitting the space station.



In this Thursday, Nov. 17, 2016 file photo, U.S. astronaut Peggy Whitson, member of the main crew of the expedition to the International Space Station, waves from a bus prior the launch of Soyuz MS-3 spaceship at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. On Thursday, March 30, 2017, Whitson set a record for the most spacewalks by a woman, eight, as she works on preparations for a new docking port on the ISS. (AP Photo/Dmitri Lovetsky, Pool)

Kimbrough need to complete prep work on a docking port. (NASA via AP)

Whitson, meanwhile, has set a new spacewalking record for women. She has surpassed the 50-hour, 40-minute mark of accumulated spacewalking time, previously set by former station resident Sunita Williams. This is the eighth spacewalk of Whitson's career, more than any other woman. At age 57, Whitson is the oldest spacewoman ever and also the most experienced.

It was a disappointing turn of events in a record-setting spacewalk for Whitson, the world's oldest and most experienced spacewoman. It was the eighth spacewalk of her career, the most ever performed by a woman.

10:30 a.m.

Spacewalking astronauts have lost an important piece of shielding needed for the International Space Station.

7:40 a.m.

The world's oldest and most experienced spacewoman has just set another record, this time for spacewalking.

The cloth bundle floated away Thursday midway through a spacewalk by Peggy Whitson and Shane Kimbrough (KIM-broh). Whitson immediately reported the mishap to Mission Control, which tracked the item as it drifted away.

NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson floated out on the eighth spacewalk of her career Thursday morning, 250 miles up at the International Space Station. That's the most spacewalks ever performed by a woman.

NASA said the shield will be monitored to make sure it doesn't come back and hit the station. The shielding protects against micrometeorite debris. It was one of four shield pieces to be installed in the hole left by a newly relocated docking port.

Whitson and her spacewalking partner, Shane Kimbrough (KIM-broh), need to complete prep work on a docking port. Kimbrough disconnected the port during a spacewalk last Friday. Flight controllers in Houston moved it to a new location Sunday. It will serve as a parking spot for future commercial crew capsules.



This still image taken from NASA shows NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson during a space walk at the International Space Station on Thursday, March 30, 2017. Whitson, the world's oldest and most experienced spacewoman has just set another record, her eighth spacewalk. Whitson and her spacewalking partner, Shane

In this image made from video provided by NASA, U.S. astronauts Shane Kimbrough, left, and Peggy Whitson, install a shield on a relocated docking port outside of the International Space Station on Thursday, March 30,

2017. An important piece of micrometeorite shielding was lost during the spacewalk at another part of the station earlier in the day. (NASA via AP)

Midway through Thursday's spacewalk, Whitson will surpass the current record for women of 50 hours and 40 minutes of total accumulated spacewalking time.

The 57-year-old Whitson has been in orbit since November.

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