

NASA updates target launch date for shuttle Discovery

by Katherine Trinidad

WASHINGTON - NASA is targeting May 25 at 7:26 p.m. EDT for the launch of the space shuttle Discovery's STS-124 mission from the Kennedy Space Center, Fla. The flight originally was targeted for April 24. Fuel sensor system repair work on STS-122 and STS-123 delayed final preparations of Discovery's external fuel tank. The tank is expected to arrive at Kennedy in early March. Also, the shuttle cannot launch to the International Space Station between May 7 and 25 because the angle of the sun with respect to the plane of the station's orbit is too high to generate sufficient solar power for the mission. Discovery's launch date move will not affect the remainder of the shuttle manifest. Shuttle and station program officials will continue to evaluate Discovery's liftoff date and are protecting the option to launch the shuttle a few days earlier. During the mission to the space station, the shuttle and its seven-member crew will deliver the pressurized module and the robotic arm of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's Kibo laboratory.

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