

Will SpaceX, Boeing See More Delays In ISS Launch Schedules?



GILLIAN RICH 10/13/2017

U.S. spacecraft development programs have little margin for error to meet an already-delayed timeline, a NASA official indicated, or else NASA astronauts may have to continue relying on Russia for the next few years to reach the International Space Station.

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Since the U.S. space shuttle fleet was retired in 2011, astronauts have been hitching rides aboard Russian Soyuz craft to get to the ISS. But the agreement has become strained as political tensions between the U.S. and Russia heat up. Autoplay: [On](#) | [Off](#)

In 2014, NASA awarded contracts to **Boeing (BA)** and **Tesla(TSLA)** founder Elon Musk's SpaceX to develop American vehicles for astronauts.

NASA had originally envisioned both companies competing in test flights and being certificated for manned missions by the end of 2017. But the scheduled for unmanned and manned tests has slipped, and most recently Boeing's unmanned test was pushed back to August 2018 from June 2018, and its crewed test was delayed to November 2018 from August 2018. SpaceX's uncrewed mission was delayed to April 2018 from February 2018 and its manned test from to August 2018 from June 2018.

But even the delayed timeline is starting to look ambitious.

"I think **we have a shot at 2018**" for the flights with crew, Kathryn Lueders, NASA's program manager for the commercial crew program, said Thursday at the International Symposium for Personal and Commercial Spaceflight in Las Cruces, N.M, according to Bloomberg. "There's a lot of things that have to go exactly right. I think the big challenge is to make sure that we give them the time ... , if everything doesn't go exactly right, to be able to fix any problems that we have."

Boeing shares fell 0.3% to 261.02 on the **stock market today**.

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Boeing is developing the CST-100 Starliner manned-capsule while SpaceX is working on its Crew Dragon capsule.

The Boeing capsule would be launched by United Launch Alliance, a joint venture of Boeing and **Lockheed Martin(LMT)**, while SpaceX has its own boosters to send the Dragon capsule into space.

The manned-crew tests come as the private sector takes a bigger role in everything from building and launching satellites to future missions to Mars.