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New launch window for the next Space Shuttle mission

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Space Shuttle Discovery on Launch Pad 39B

The US space agency NASA has announced 1 to 19 July 2006 as the new launch window for Space Shuttle Discovery's mission (STS-121). The window gives the agency time to do additional engineering work and analysis, ensuring a safe flight to the ISS for Discovery, whose crew includes ESA's German astronaut, Thomas Reiter.

The decision to delay until July followed a two-day meeting on the external fuel tank's engine cutoff (ECO) sensors. The sensors indicate whether the tank still has fuel during liftoff. During testing, one of the four ECO sensors had a slightly different reading than was expected. Shuttle officials have decided they will remove and replace all four liquid hydrogen sensors.

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