

## First manned SpaceX mission set for June 2019



NASA has just announced the first manned flight to the International Space Station (ISS) to be launched in June 2019 by SpaceX, and it will be followed by a flight on a Boeing spacecraft in August 2019. This manned flight will be the first US launch to the orbiting research lab since the space shuttle program retired before 7 years in 2011.

The launch date for both flights have been postponed so many times, but this time they will provide monthly updates on deadlines, making the launch of both the spacecraft timelier. Phil McAlister, director of Commercial Spaceflight Development at NASA Headquarters said on this, "This new process for reporting our schedule is better; nevertheless, launch dates will still have some uncertainty, and we anticipate they may change as we get closer to launch."

SpaceX will use the Falcon 9 rocket for the launch of these spacecraft. It will have Crew Dragon capsule attached on its top. As these are new spacecraft, the engineering teams have a lot of work to do before the spacecraft gets ready to fly. Both these missions are considered for tests, and two astronauts will be sent in each flight and they will spend two weeks aboard the orbiting the ISS, and then they will return to the Earth. Before sending those astronauts to space, the unmanned test will happen in January 2019 and in March 2019 for Boeing flight.

The success of these spacecraft will be a great achievement for the human beings, and it will enable NASA to focus on deep space exploration with the Orion spacecraft and Space Launch System of NASA. NASA is depending on the success of both these aircraft missions, as the contract they made with the Russian Space Agency will expire in November 2019. So, the launch of both the aircraft must happen before the contract expires.