



Written by [D. Michael DeRidder](#) on June 24, 2024

NASA Delays Boeing Starliner Return to Earth

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) [Commercial Crew Program](#) — NASA’s government-commercial partnership — announced on X the decision by NASA leaders to [delay the return of astronauts](#) Barry “Butch” Wilmore, and Suni Williams:

Leaders from @NASA and @BoeingSpace are adjusting the June 26 return to Earth of the Crew Flight Test mission with @NASA_Astronauts Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams from @Space_Station. This adjustment deconflicts from a series of spacewalks while allowing mission teams time to review propulsion system data and assess any additional testing opportunities. Mission managers are evaluating future return opportunities following the station’s two planned spacewalks on June 24 and July 2.



Chris Hadfield/X

They had previously planned for Wilmore and Williams to return to Earth on June 25, [stating on X](#):

Teams from @NASA and @BoeingSpace are targeting NET 10:10pm ET June 25 for the undocking of the #Starliner spacecraft from @Space_Station, landing early June 26 at White Sands Space Harbor in New Mexico.

NASA Commercial Crew Program manager Steve Stich stated in a [NASA mission blog update](#):

We are taking our time and following our standard mission management team process.... Starliner is performing well in orbit while docked to the space station.... We are strategically using the extra time to clear a path for some critical station activities while completing readiness for Butch and Suni’s return on Starliner and gaining valuable insight into the system upgrades we will want to make for post-certification missions.

The update noted that the two astronauts have plenty of time to return to Earth, as the station has enough supplies and the schedule is open in the near future:

Wilmore and Williams remain integrated with the Expedition 71 crew, assisting with station operations as needed and completing add-on in-flight objectives for NASA certification of Starliner.... The crew is not pressed for time to leave the station since there are plenty of



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supplies in orbit, and the station's schedule is relatively open through mid-August.

Canadian retired astronaut Chris Hadfield [said the delay was a "joyful bonus,"](#) allowing Wilmore and Williams extra time in space and allowing the International Space Station crew to complete more work:

Suni and Butch (in blue) are staying longer than planned up on the Space Station while the spacewalking schedule and their @Boeing return spaceship's snags get sorted out. It's a joyful bonus for them to have extra time in space, helping the ISS crew get more work done. Landing currently planned for 2 July - via parachute and airbags into New Mexico.

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— Chris Hadfield (@Cmdr_Hadfield) [June 22, 2024](#)



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