

ISS Crew Members Prepare for Final Spacewalk

The International Space Station crew has unpacked the Progress cargo spacecraft, and they are preparing to replace a faulty component in the Quest Airlock with a new unit delivered on the supply craft.

The replacement of the heat exchanger is scheduled for next week. The job will set the stage to restore use of the airlock as a base for spacewalks using U.S. spacesuits. The heat exchanger provides cooling for the suits, while they are connected to the airlock.

Expedition 10 Commander and NASA Station Science Officer Leroy Chiao and Flight Engineer Salizhan Sharipov also conducted some routine periodic maintenance and inspection tasks, including strategic placement of sound measuring devices that document noise levels. This typically is done twice during a crew's six-month stay aboard the Station.

The second and final spacewalk for Chiao and Sharipov is scheduled for the early morning hours Monday, March 28. To prepare Chiao moved the Station's Canadarm2 robotic arm into position this week for optimum camera viewing and conducted several maneuvers to review spacewalk worksites.

The Station's Elektron oxygen-generating system has operated intermittently during the past week. Sharipov is scheduled to perform further troubleshooting efforts on the device tomorrow. The problem has not impacted the replenishment of oxygen in the Station cabin. The Elektron, which converts water into oxygen, is one of several methods for replenishing oxygen on board the Station.

This week Sharipov set up an experiment gathering measurements of radiation. He also worked with another experiment to study high-efficiency strains of microorganisms for producing petroleum biodegradation compounds.

Both crewmembers took turns as patient and doctor on the Advanced Diagnostic in Ultrasound in Microgravity experiment. The experiment studies the use of remote ultrasound observation in space to allow doctors on the ground to diagnose medical conditions.

Source: NASA

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