# Boeing and NASA's Starliner Launch Delayed Due to Helium Leak: Safety Measures in Place



**Boeing and NASA Face Delays with Starliner Launch Due to Helium Leak**

Boeing's Starliner spacecraft, initially scheduled to transport NASA astronauts Barry "Butch" Wilmore and Sunita Williams to the International Space Station (ISS) on May 6, encountered a series of technical issues, leading to a postponement of the launch to at least June 1 from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

On May 6, the astronauts were strapped in and ready for liftoff when engineers identified a malfunctioning valve in the second stage of the Atlas V rocket, leading to an aborted launch. Subsequently, a helium leak in the Starliner's propulsion system was detected, adding to the complexity of the issue.

Upon investigation, the leak was traced to a defective seal in a helium line leading to one of the spacecraft's 28 reaction control system engines. Despite identifying and managing the leak, NASA and Boeing discovered a "design vulnerability" in the propulsion system that could hinder the spacecraft's ability to return safely to Earth. The teams have since developed contingency plans to address this potential problem.

The current target for the Starliner launch is June 1. The flight aims to test the spacecraft's performance with astronauts aboard, critical for future regular missions transporting crews to the ISS. Boeing's program has faced numerous delays and setbacks, including software glitches and corroded valves, worsening helium leaks, and other technical hitches that have pushed the project years behind schedule and over budget.

NASA and Boeing emphasize that ensuring the astronauts' safety remains the top priority, and they will only proceed with the launch upon full resolution and review of the existing issues. This test mission, if successful, will advance Boeing's role in NASA's crewed spaceflight program, complementing the efforts of SpaceX, which has been launching NASA crews since 2020.