

# SpaceX Removes Dragon Crew Arm to Boost Starship in Florida

## Description

Pad 40 has been the main launch site for the Falcon 9 rocket for most of its history, while Pad 39A has hosted crew launches and supported SpaceX's increasing launch schedule. However, it appears that the Falcon 9 launch frequency, which reached 165 missions last year, may be levelling off as the company shifts focus to its Starship rocket. SpaceX has been reducing the time needed to prepare Pad 40 for launches, now completing this process in less than 48 hours.

If necessary, SpaceX officials stated they could reinstall the crew arm for Dragon missions from Pad 39A.

Bill Gerstenmaier, SpaceX's vice president of build and flight reliability, highlighted another important reason for removing the crew arm at Pad 39A. The bearings connecting the arm to the launch pad's tower require repairs.

"To access those, the arm needs to be removed," Gerstenmaier explained. "Those bearings must be taken out and replaced. We will carry out this work at the Kennedy Space Center. Our goal is not to rush to reinstall the arm; if we get called for a mission, we have ample time to put it back up."

SpaceX continues to launch Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy rockets from Pad 39A, despite nearby construction for Starship. Gerstenmaier noted that this does not hinder their launch capabilities. However, this might change as SpaceX begins testing Starships, which could lead to Pad 39A being closed to personnel.

Gerstenmaier confirmed the intent to replace the bearings and upgrade them before reinstalling the arm when it is needed for future missions.

## Vocabulary List:

1. **Frequency** /'fri:.kwən.si/ (noun): The rate at which something occurs over a particular period of time.
2. **Installed** /ɪn'stɔ:ld/ (verb): Set in position for use.
3. **Reinstall** /,ri:ɪn'stɔ:l/ (verb): To install something again.
4. **Maintenance** /'meɪn.tə.nəns/ (noun): The process of keeping something in good condition.
5. **Capabilities** /,keɪ.pə'bɪl.ɪ.tiz/ (noun): The power or ability to do something.
6. **Confirm** /kən'fɜ:rm/ (verb): To state or prove the truth of something.

## Comprehension Questions

## Multiple Choice

1. What is the main launch site for the Falcon 9 rocket?

- Option: Pad 40
- Option: Pad 39A
- Option: Kennedy Space Center
- Option: Starship Launch Site

2. What is the reason cited for reducing the Falcon 9 launch frequency?

- Option: Focus on Starship rocket
- Option: Technical issues
- Option: Lack of funding
- Option: Regulatory constraints

3. Where do SpaceX officials plan to conduct repairs on the bearings connecting the crew arm to the launch pad's tower?

- Option: Kennedy Space Center
- Option: Pad 40
- Option: Starship Launch Site
- Option: International Space Station

4. What is Bill Gerstenmaier's role at SpaceX?

- Option: Vice President of Build and Flight Reliability
- Option: Lead Engineer
- Option: Chief Financial Officer
- Option: Head of Marketing

5. Which launch site is known to have hosted crew launches and supported SpaceX's increasing launch schedule?

- Option: Pad 40
- Option: Pad 39A
- Option: Kennedy Space Center
- Option: Starship Launch Site

6. What is SpaceX's goal regarding the reinstallation of the crew arm for future missions?

- Option: Not to rush
- Option: Complete within 24 hours
- Option: Outsource the task

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Option: Implement automation

### True-False

7. SpaceX officials mentioned that they could reinstall the crew arm for Dragon missions from Pad 40 if necessary.
8. Bearings connecting the crew arm to the launch pad's tower require repairs, according to Bill Gerstenmaier.
9. Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy rockets are launched from Pad 39A.
10. Pad 39A may be closed to personnel as SpaceX begins testing Starships.
11. SpaceX's focus is mainly on Falcon 9 missions, rather than Starship rocket development.
12. The crew arm will be reinstalled without any upgrades before future missions.

### Gap-Fill

13. SpaceX completed the process of preparing Pad 40 for launches in less than \_\_\_\_\_ hours.
14. Bill Gerstenmaier confirmed the intent to replace and upgrade the bearings before reinstalling the arm when it is needed for future missions to ensure reliability post \_\_\_\_\_.
15. Pad 39A has hosted crew launches and supported SpaceX's increasing launch schedule, while Pad 40 has been the main launch site for the \_\_\_\_\_ for most of its history.
16. The bearings connecting the arm to the launch pad's tower require repairs. To access those, the arm needs to be removed and the bearings must be taken out and \_\_\_\_\_.
17. SpaceX has been reducing the time needed to prepare Pad 40 for launches, now completing this process



in less than \_\_\_\_\_ hours.

18. Bill Gerstenmaier is the vice president of build and flight \_\_\_\_\_ at SpaceX.

## Answer

**Multiple Choice:** 1. Pad 40 2. Focus on Starship rocket 3. Kennedy Space Center 4. Vice President of Build and Flight Reliability 5. Pad 39A 6. Not to rush

**True-False:** 7. False 8. True 9. True 10. True 11. False 12. False

**Gap-Fill:** 13. 48 14. repairs 15. Falcon 9 rocket 16. replaced 18. reliability

## CATEGORY

1. Sci/Tech - LEVEL4

## POST TAG

1. B2
2. Dragon crew arm
3. ESL learning
4. esl news
5. Florida
6. Level 4
7. spaceX
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