

The National Space Society Congratulates SpaceX on the first Orbital Flight of Starship

Test Flight 14 Placed Starlink Satellites into Orbit and Reentered Successfully

MERRITT ISLAND, FL, UNITED STATES, September 29, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- The [National Space Society](#) congratulates SpaceX's 14th flight test of its Starship heavy launch rocket. The rocket reached orbit for the first time after lifting off from Starbase at 7:48 a.m. Central Time on September 28.



Launch of Starship Test Flight 14. Credit: SpaceX

During Starship's ascent, after the upper stage, called Ship, separated from the booster, one of its six Raptor engines shut down early, causing flight controllers to consider aborting the orbital attempt, but the company ultimately decided to press on to orbit and Ship reached low-Earth

orbit about 25 minutes after liftoff. Ship carried 26 operational third-generation Starlink satellites which it deployed successfully, a first for the Starship test program. SpaceX noted that this single deployment launched the bandwidth equivalent about ten Falcon 9 flights worth of smaller Starlink satellites. This order of magnitude increase resulted from the ability of the much larger Starship to loft the more capable—and heavier—third generation V3 Starlink satellites.

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The National Space Society congratulates SpaceX and the Starship team on this achievement and the progress it represents.”

*Karlton Johnson, NSS CEO and
Chairman of the Board of
Governors*

Karlton Johnson, CEO of the NSS, said, “Starship's first orbital mission is an important milestone for spaceflight, at the same time reminding us that developing new capabilities at this scale is rarely a straight line. Reaching orbit and successfully deploying its payload, even as the mission encountered challenges, provides valuable experience for what comes next. The National Space Society congratulates SpaceX and the Starship team on this achievement and the progress it represents.”

Once the booster stage had completed its job, it relit most of its engines and returned for a

controlled splashdown in the Gulf of Mexico. Future flights will return the booster to the launch pad for a catch by the Mechazilla recovery mechanism.

The upper stage returned to Earth early, cutting the planned mission from ten hours to about two hours and 40 minutes. It made a demanding reentry as planned and splashed down in the northern Pacific Ocean.

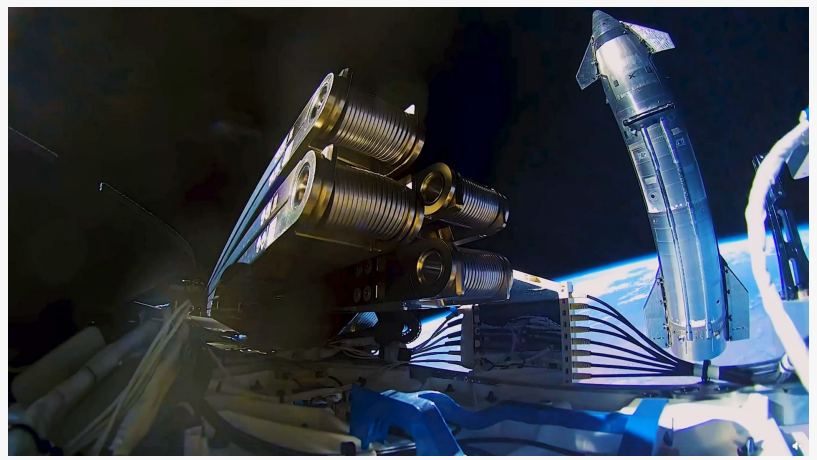
"Today Starship Flight 14 successfully reached orbit and delivered 26 Starlink Version 3 satellites," said Dale Skran, NSS COO. "Although not totally nominal, today's flight shows that Starship has achieved the ability to launch payloads and return under control. Just as with Falcon 9, revenue-generating flights will continue the test program until full reusability is achieved."

Starship stands 407 feet (124 meters) tall will ultimately be able to deliver more than 110 tons (100 metric tons) to low-Earth orbit. The rocket's Super Heavy booster and Ship upper stage are both designed to be fully reusable with rapid turnaround and once fully operational, will represent an enormous step toward affordable and reliable access to orbit. If progress continues as SpaceX hopes, versions of Starship will test orbital refueling in the near future, be part of the Artemis 3 Earth orbital lunar lander test in 2027 and could be delivering astronauts to the lunar surface shortly thereafter.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL SPACE SOCIETY

The National Space Society is the preeminent non-partisan citizens' voice on space exploration, development, and settlement, reaching millions through its membership, numerous outreach channels, and media activities. The organization was founded in 1987 via a merger of the National Space Institute and the L5 Society. To learn more about the NSS and its mission to establish humanity as a spacefaring species, visit us on the web at nss.org.

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View of Starship from a Starlink satellite. Credit: SpaceX

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