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SpaceX Test-Fires Rocket for 60-Satellite Starlink Launch, the 1st of 2020

by Marie DeFreitas



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On Saturday SpaceX tweeted that the company had completed the the static fire test of the Falcon 9 rocket. They said they are targeting today, Monday January 6th, for the launch of starlink satellites from Florida.

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SpaceX conducted the test fire of the starlink satellites at the Space Launch Complex 40 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida. These satellites are aimed at providing satellite Internet access. The constellation will consist of thousands of mass-produced small satellites, working in combination with ground transceivers.

According to *Space.com* The Falcon 9 rocket out of its hangar on Friday (Jan. 3) and went vertical on the launch pad in advance of the planned test-firing of its nine first stage engines on Saturday. The two-stage rocket is scheduled for liftoff Monday at 9:19 p.m. EST (0219 GMT Tuesday).



Before the rocket can launch, SpaceX puts it through a routine launch rehearsal. This brief test, known as a static-fire test, is a standard part of prelaunch procedures and one of the last major milestones before liftoff. During this test, teams loaded the Falcon's super-chilled propellants — (consisting of kerosene and liquid oxygen) — into the rocket before igniting the first stage's nine Merlin 1D engines.

The engines briefly fired at 12 p.m. EST (1700 GMT), generating more than 1 million pounds of thrust while the booster remained firmly on the ground. Engineers reviewed the data before deciding to proceed with the Falcon 9's planned launch attempt Monday evening, according to

Space.com.

Throughout 2019, SpaceX launched a total of 13 times. Their last mission was a Falcon 9 booster that had been flown twice before. Taking off for the third time, it carried a heavy-weight





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The company will now return to take off a third batch of Starlink satellites. This time it will be on a Falcon rocket that has already flown three successful missions. This rocket, dubbed as B1049.4 (an internal SpaceX identifier), previously hauled a batch of Starlink satellites as well as the Iridium-8 and Telstar 18 VANTAGE missions, according to *Space.com*.

According to *Spaceflight Now*, Gwynne Shotwell, SpaceX's president and chief operating officer, said last month the company could perform as many as 35 to 38 launches this year from three launch pads in Florida and California. That figure does not include potential test flights of SpaceX's next-generation Starship vehicle.



Elon Musk said SpaceX will need at least 400 Starlink satellites in orbit for "minor" broadband coverage, and 800 satellites aloft for "moderate" coverage. With less than 10 more launches, the company claims it could begin offering broadband service in the United States sometime in 2020, according to Space.com.

According to weather forecasters, conditions today should be ideal for the launch.

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