



Launch Complex 48

Launch Complex 48 is the newest launch site at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida, designed specifically for small-class commercial vehicles and the small satellite industry. Completed in August 2020, the 10-acre complex provides a dedicated space for vehicles generating 500,000 pounds of thrust or less.

The facility includes a launch pad, paved surfaces, an area for customers to stage fuel tanks or other commodities, and a catch basin for sound suppression water. The only fixed structures at the pad include the catch basin and wind socks. This flexible, "clean pad" design allows multiple commercial launch service providers, as well as commercial research and development endeavors, to test and operate launch vehicles or propulsion systems at Kennedy with short turnaround time. Each customer brings in the resources or commodities required by their vehicle and takes those back with them once their vehicle launches, leaving an empty pad for the next user.

Located about a mile south of Kennedy's historic Launch Complex 39A on Cape Road, the main roadway connecting launch complexes bordering the ocean, the site was chosen to minimize operational disruptions at other launch sites on the Space Coast. The launch complex layout is designed to minimize area usage while maintaining the minimum required set-back distances for explosives safety among the various pad elements.

Quick Facts

Launch pad: 42 by 54 feet, 4 feet thick

Elevation: 7 feet above sea level

Maximum vehicle gross liftoff weight:
300,000 pounds



The "clean pad" design and basic infrastructure of Kennedy Space Center's Launch Complex 48 offers greater flexibility for small-class vehicle customers whose rockets have varying needs. Photo credit: NASA/Ben Smegelsky.

NASAfacts

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