

Launch Operations



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The rocket does not care much about the gantry or what stands behind it. It is poised to explode into space on the back of its powerful thrusters with transition to warp speed shortly thereafter, no doubt. The universe waits to be discovered and an appreciation for the history and support structure that makes the launch possible will have to wait a while. For the avoidance of doubt, you are the gantry and your son or daughter is the rocket. Let's assume you are not trying to live vicariously through your offspring and you are not trying to mould him or her to the pre-conceived

image you certainly have in mind, but rather that your pure and steadfast goal is to facilitate the success of their own personal mission in life; whatever that might turn out to be. If you are in this for the credit you might want to come up with a backup plan.

As the gantry falls away, which is where you are now, Mission Control is suddenly reduced to radio communication. Until that moment the launch sequence could be interrupted at any time while all manner of equipment and personnel could be applied directly to the rocket. That luxury has expired. If there is a problem now, the best you can do is to provide radio advice on how to jury-rig an air purification system from spare parts for the zero-gravity toilet. The isolated crew are going to have to do it themselves. They still need Houston to calculate a re-entry that doesn't involve incineration, but they may not realize this until they have been in orbit for a while. Be patient and wait for the 911 call. I realize this is difficult.

Planning, training and ground operations are all vital to the success of the mission, but after launch you can't use your own tools anymore. You should start shifting to radio support as soon as possible. Trust me. Call me.

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