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Cosmonauts Face Toilet Issues After Russian Spacecraft Failure

By The Moscow Times

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Space toilets are notorious contraptions that use vacuum powered hoses to suck up human excrement before it floats away in the weightless environment of space.

Russian cosmonauts aboard the International Space Station (ISS) may have to make fewer trips to the bathroom after the loss of an unmanned resupply vehicle destined for station last week left the crew without new waste storage bags, news agency Interfax reported Tuesday.

"Usually, these items are replaced upon use," an unidentified space industry source told Interfax. "Now, in order to save them, we have decided to use them longer," the source said.

New supplies were supposed to be arrive at the station last week, but the Progress freighter launched to deliver them was declared lost shortly after reaching space. Progress was carrying over 3 tons of cargo. One ton of these were life-support supplies — which beyond toilet supplies included water, food and other essentials, according to Interfax.

The Russian space agency has yet to identify the cause of the mission failure.

With the next launch of a Progress supply ship not slated until August, the request to reuse supplies such as waste storage bags may become logistically challenging.

Space toilets are notorious contraptions that use vacuum powered hoses to suck up human excrement before it floats away in the weightless environment of space. The hoses feed into plastic bags, which are then stored in aluminum containers until a Progress ship can dispose of them in the ocean.

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