

First GPS III Satellite Reaches Orbit



After extensive delays, the first next-generation GPS III Space Vehicle 01 (GPS III SV01) has been successfully launched and reached medium Earth orbit. GPS III SV01 was lofted aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 in the last days of 2018.

Initially slated for a 2014 launch, GPS III SV01 is the first of ten GPS Block IIIA satellites, the latest generation of the US Air Force's Global Positioning System.

The vehicle's completion and launch were successively pushed back by delays related to an untested capacitor used in the spacecraft's construction, and GPS ground system known as the Operational Control Segment.

The new spacecraft will support new civilian L1C and L2C navigation signals, along with a new M-code military signal and the L5 Safety of Life signal.

Each of these signals will be classed as fully operational when broadcast by a full complement of 24 satellites, which is projected to be in 2021 for L2C; 2022 for M-code; 2024 for Safety of Life and the late 2020s for L1C.

The tenth and final GPS Block IIIA satellite launch is currently scheduled for Q2 2022.

<https://www.gim-international.com/content/news/first-gps-iii-satellite-reaches-orbit-2>
