



Written by [D. Michael DeRidder](#) on March 14, 2024

SpaceX Launches Third Starship Test Flight

SpaceX launched its third Starship test flight, IFT-3, this morning at 8:25 a.m. local time in Boca Chica, Texas. Elon Musk celebrated the launch, and congratulated the SpaceX team, [stating on X](#), “Starship reached orbital velocity! Congratulations @SpaceX team!!”

Starship reached orbital velocity!

Congratulations [@SpaceX](#) team!!

— Elon Musk (@elonmusk)

[March 14, 2024](#)



AP Images

SpaceX IFT-3 launching on March 14

SpaceX announced the [objectives of the third test flight on its website](#):

The third flight test aims to build on what we’ve learned from previous flights while attempting a number of ambitious objectives, including the successful ascent burn of both stages, opening and closing Starship’s payload door, a propellant transfer demonstration during the upper stage’s coast phase, the first ever re-light of a Raptor engine while in space, and a controlled reentry of Starship. It will also fly a new trajectory, with Starship targeted to splashdown in the Indian Ocean. This new flight path enables us to attempt new techniques like in-space engine burns while maximizing public safety.”

During the live stream of the test flight, SpaceX announced at 9:31 a.m. that Starship IFT-3 was lost on reentry 49 minutes into the flight. Despite the spacecraft being lost, the SpaceX team remained optimistic about the progress over previous test flights, the information obtained during the flight, and stated they are looking forward to the launch of the fourth Starship, IFT-4.

Starship re-entering Earth's atmosphere. Views through the plasma
pic.twitter.com/HEQX4eEHWH

— SpaceX (@SpaceX) [March 14, 2024](#)



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