

## Building Curiosity –The Big Move

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Hi, I'm Ben Thoma, the mechanical lead of the assembly, testing and launch operations of the Mars Science Laboratory project.

We've already sent heat shield, the back shield and the cruise stage, and on this trip we're sending the descent stage, and, of course, the Curiosity rover herself. There's an enormous amount of logistics involved in planning such an operation. When we're talking about moving an entire spacecraft along with all its support equipment, literally across the entire country, it takes months and months of planning and weeks and weeks to execute.

Curiosity is flipped upside down for its ride to Kennedy Space Center. The same orientation it will be for launch. In this orientation, we carefully wrap Curiosity in a big, huge bag; that bag not only acts as a Faraday cage, but it keeps Curiosity clean for her journey to Florida.

When she's all bagged up and ready, we have many engineers and many technicians gather around and safely lift Curiosity up and down into her shipping container base.

We lift a big lid on top of that shipping container. It's that shipping container that is then used to transport her across the roads and across the air on her journey to Florida.

We actually arrive at Kennedy on a C-17, a military cargo plane, which will land at. The same landing strip that the shuttle lands at.

The team and I are really looking forward to our launch this November from Kennedy Space Center.

I'm Ben Thoma and this has been your Building Curiosity Update.