

The journey to transport the world's largest camera to the top of the mountain is more than 2,700m

The 3-ton digital camera was transported by plane and truck from its manufacturing site, the SLAC National Acceleration Laboratory in California, to its location on the 2,700-meter-high Cerro Pachón mountain peak in the Andes, Chile. full.

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The camera being transported is the centerpiece of the newly completed Vera C. Rubin Observatory after two decades of development. This is the last major part of the Simonyi Survey Telescope at the Rubin Observatory.

This camera weighs 3 tons and is 1.5 meters wide, making it the largest camera ever built for astronomy. Equipment worth 168 million USD. To minimize risks to the device, in 2021, scientists and engineers carried out a run-through when shipping a similar mass replica to Chile. All conditions that the real camera will experience during its journey are saved when the simulation is shipped.

Margaux Lopez, a mechanical engineer at SLAC, was in charge of planning the transport of the camera, sharing that transporting a sophisticated device that took up to 10 years to assemble with a 10-hour flight and a winding dirt road up the mountain was something extremely difficult with many risks. But thanks to our experience and data from the test shipment, we are confident that we can protect the camera safely.

On May 14, the camera was delivered to San Francisco airport for the 10-hour flight to Chile on a Boeing 747 cargo plane. Then, the equipment and a convoy of nine trucks began a five-hour journey on winding dirt roads. 35 km long to the top of the mountain at an altitude of more than 2,713 m above sea level.

Initial indicators, including information gathered by data loggers, accelerometers and shock sensors, indicate they were successful.

The Rubin Observatory will go into operation later this year with the mission of taking panoramic images of the southern sky every few evenings, helping to catalog the "Legacy Survey of Space and Time" with about 37 billion objects to help Astronomers study the universe.

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