

First Electric VTOL Lilium Jet Bursts Into Fire

Lilium's sustainable electric plane burst into fire and burned beyond repair, but the second prototype was undamaged.



By Brad Bergan

March 03, 2020



Source: The Jet / Lilium

The first Lilium Jet electric VTOL prototype was destroyed when it burst into fire. It will be replaced by a backup, the only one left in the flight-test program, reports Electrek.

Lilium's other electric plane survived

Lilium said its last Lilium jet prototype flight testing may be delayed several weeks, while the company looks into the cause of the fire, according to Elektrek. "Flight-testing of the second Lilium Jet will only begin when we have discovered the root cause of the fire and implemented any necessary updates into the aircraft. Safety is our key concern," said the aviation startup on FlightGlobal.

The aviation company experienced a serious loss on Feb. 27: While the crew performed routine maintenance, the Lilium Jet electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) caught fire. The startup said it was damaged beyond repair, which means it will have to use its other prototype for flight, which was not damaged in the fire that happened at the Oberpfaffenhoffen Airport in Germany. No one was injured, according to Lilium.

The news of the burn broke on AIN where, lamenting the ordeal, a spokesperson said unearthing the roots of the fire could take weeks. Luckily for the company, the second prototype was already slated for the actual flight testing, while the prototype was due to be retired in the short-term future.

Lilium's eVTOL, called Jet for short, was used for air-taxi testing and is due to be introduced into urban air mobility (UAM) service in 2025. The jet uses a distributed energy propulsion platform and has 36 ducted fans that allow vectored thrust flight. They are in the main wing and the forward canard. Its estimated range is up to 186 miles, and may reach speeds of 300 kilometers per hour (185.3 miles per hour).

The future flight is in precarious straits, as the effects of fossil fuels and pollution from high jet traffic is increasingly linked to climate change. So naturally, a few minor tragedies with no human casualties are more than worth the effort to create new and sustainable alternatives for human transportation.