



CESSNA CITATION CJ3 GEN3 ACHIEVES FIRST FLIGHT, ADVANCING NEXT-GENERATION LIGHT JET TOWARD CERTIFICATION

News / Business aviation, Manufacturer



Textron Aviation achieved a key milestone as the [Cessna Citation CJ3 Gen3](#) prototype aircraft completed its first flight, advancing the next-generation light jet toward certification. With this milestone, all three next-generation Citation light jets — the CJ4 Gen3, CJ3 Gen3 and M2 Gen3 — have entered flight testing, demonstrating continued momentum across the Cessna next-generation light jet portfolio.

Chris Hearne, senior vice president, Engineering & Programs commented: "This achievement continues the forward momentum of the CJ3 Gen3 program and reflects the discipline, innovation and commitment of this team. Comprehensive flight testing will now begin for this aircraft with rigorous validation of its performance as we continue to work toward FAA certification and entry into service."

Lannie O'Bannion, senior vice president, Global Sales & Marketing stated: "The Citation CJ3 Gen3 builds on everything customers value about the CJ3 family while incorporating technology they've asked for to make flying even more intuitive and confidence-inspiring. From advanced Garmin

avionics to a refined cabin experience, this aircraft reflects our commitment to delivering practical innovations for customers.”

Taking off from Wichita Dwight D. Eisenhower National Airport, pilots Steve Helmer and Dave Welbrock focused on testing software functionality in the cockpit during the initial nearly two-hour flight. The aircraft reached a maximum altitude of 41,000 feet and a maximum speed of 278 knots indicated.

“From takeoff to landing, the aircraft demonstrated the handling qualities and system performance we expected,” said Helmer, flight test pilot. “This first flight validated months of preparation and provided a strong foundation as we expand testing and continue the certification program.”

Designed from customer feedback, the Citation CJ3 Gen3 brings Garmin Emergency Autoland to the proven Garmin G3000 avionics platform, offering even greater peace of mind to the journey for both pilots and passengers. The aircraft combines advanced intuitive flight deck technology with the performance, payload and operating efficiency customers expect from Cessna Citation business jets.

30 JULY 2026

ARTICLE LINK:

<https://50skyshades.com/news/business-aviation/cessna-citation-cj3-gen3-achieves-first-flight-advancing-next-generation-light-jet-toward-certification>