

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-18-359](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

The Navy's VH-92A program—also known as the Presidential Helicopter—provides new helicopters for safe, reliable, and timely transportation for the President of the United States. The Navy plans to acquire a fleet of 23 VH-92A helicopters to replace the Marine Corps' existing fleet of VH-3D and VH-60N aircraft. Initial delivery of VH-92A helicopters is scheduled to begin in fiscal year 2020 with production ending in fiscal year 2023.

The Navy's acquisition strategy hinges on three key factors: (1) utilization of a commercial aircraft, (2) integration of mature technologies, and (3) retention of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) original airworthiness certifications to avoid costly total airworthiness recertification.

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2014 included a provision for GAO to report on the VH-92A program annually, which GAO has been doing since 2011. This report discusses (1) the cost and schedule status of the program and (2) challenges facing the program in system development.

To determine how the program is progressing, GAO analyzed program documents; and spoke with officials from the program, the Defense Contract Management Agency, contractors, and testing offices.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is not making any recommendations in this report, but will continue to monitor the potential for cost growth and schedule delays as the program responds to design changes and challenges meeting capability requirements.

View [GAO-18-359](#). For more information, contact Michael J. Sullivan at (202) 512-4841 or sullivanm@gao.gov.

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PRESIDENTIAL HELICOPTER

VH-92A Program Is Stable and Making Progress While Facing Challenges

What GAO Found

The Presidential Helicopter (VH-92A) program's planned aircraft quantities and key schedule events remain stable, and the program's latest cost estimate shows a decrease of 2.4 percent, or about \$123 million (see table below). Contractor officials attribute these cost reductions to the small number of design changes, stable requirements, and efficiencies from cost saving initiatives.

VH-92A Program Quantities Remain Stable and Cost Estimates Have Decreased

	April 2014 initial baseline	August 2017 latest estimate	Percentage change
Cost estimate (then-year dollars in millions)			
Development	\$2,805.7	\$2,731.6	-2.6%
Procurement	2,379.0	2,330.3	-2.0
Total program acquisition	5,184.7	5,061.9	-2.4
Total program acquisition unit cost	225.4	220.1	-2.4
Expected total quantities (number of aircraft)	23	23	0%

Source: GAO presentation of Navy data. | GAO-18-359

The program's stability is also attributable to the Navy's acquisition strategy. The contractor, Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation is converting its existing commercial S-92A helicopter to VH-92A helicopters, as depicted below.

Conversion of Sikorsky's Commercial Helicopter to the VH-92 Helicopter



Source: © 2016 Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation, a Lockheed Martin Company (photos); GAO analysis of Navy program office information. | GAO-18-359

While the program has made progress, it continues to face development challenges that may adversely affect its ability to deliver fully capable VH-92A aircraft on time. Recently, the Navy and contractors have

- taken steps to address parts shortages and track any related delays;
- investigated the cost and schedule implications of a request to modify the forward door of the aircraft; and
- continued work to resolve issues related to electromagnetic event survivability and landing zone suitability.

Final resolution of these issues may not occur until after production start, currently scheduled for March 2019.