

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98-ANE-21-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Pratt & Whitney JT9D Series Turbofan Engines

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to certain Pratt & Whitney (PW) JT9D series turbofan engines. This proposal would require a one-time acid etch inspection of the turbine exhaust case (TEC) wall between and on either side of the "R" and "S" rails in the engine mount lug area (top quadrant of the case) for the presence of weld material, and if weld material is detected, removal from service and replacement with serviceable parts. This proposal is prompted by reports of weld rework performed in the outer case wall of the TEC, in the mount lug fillet area, during original production to address local under minimum wall thickness conditions which have left the TEC's structural capability compromised. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent TEC structural failure under abnormal operating conditions, which could result in reduced main mount load capability, which could result in an engine separating from the wing and subsequent loss of control of the aircraft.

DATES: Comments must be received by July 6, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), New England Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98-ANE-21-AD, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803-5299. Comments

may also be sent via the Internet using the following address: "9-ad-engineprop@faa.dot.gov". Comments sent via the Internet must contain the docket number in the subject line. Comments may be inspected at this location between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from Pratt & Whitney, 400 Main St., East Hartford, CT 06108; telephone (860) 565-6600, fax (860) 565-4503. This information may be examined at the FAA, New England Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tara Goodman, Aerospace Engineer, Engine Certification Office, FAA, Engine and Propeller Directorate, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803-5299; telephone (781) 238-7130, fax (781) 238-7199.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the proposed rule by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications should identify the Rules Docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address specified above. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments, specified above, will be considered before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposals contained in this notice may be changed in light of the comments received.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the proposed rule. All comments submitted will be available, both before and after the closing date for comments, in the Rules Docket for examination by interested persons. A report summarizing each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this proposal will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this notice must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket Number 98-ANE-21-AD." The

postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of NPRMs

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM by submitting a request to the FAA, New England Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98-ANE-21-AD, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803-5299.

Discussion

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has received reports of weld rework performed in the outer case wall of the turbine exhaust case (TEC), in the mount lug fillet area, during original production to address local under minimum wall thickness conditions which have left the TEC's structural capability compromised on certain Pratt & Whitney (PW) Models JT9D-7, -7A, -7H, -7AH, -7F, -7J, -20, -20J, -7Q, -7Q3, -59A, -70A, and -7R4D turbofan engines. The investigation identified 24 TECs as having a weld rework performed to the case wall during original production to address local under minimum wall thickness conditions. Rework procedure authorization did not limit welding locations on the circumference of the case wall and permitted welding either on the inner diameter or the outer diameter of the part. A weld rework may or may not have been performed in the mount area on the 24 turbine exhaust cases, only 11 of which have been identified by serial number (S/N). The FAA has determined that possibly other TECs that had the welding rework procedure have a quality review order (QRO) number marked on it next to the part. At this time one of the 24 turbine exhaust cases (S/N JC4708) has been located and removed from service. Engine manual repair allowances were never intended to authorize welding in the vicinity of the engine mount lugs due to structural concerns for engine mount integrity under abnormal engine operating conditions. The FAA believes that the majority of these parts have been installed in engines; however, there may be some that are presently not installed. The manufacturer regards weld repairs in the turbine exhaust case wall on either side of the "R" and "S" rails in the engine mount lug area unacceptable and does not authorize or accept case wall weld repairs in the

engine mount lug area. This condition, if not corrected, could result in TEC structural failure under abnormal operating conditions, which could result in reduced main mount load capability, which could result in an engine separating from the wing and subsequent loss of control of the aircraft.

The FAA has reviewed and approved the technical contents PW Alert Service Bulletin (ASB) No. JT9D-A6322, Revision 1, dated March 19, 1998, and ASB No. JT9D-7R4-A72-546, Revision 1, dated March 19, 1998, that describe procedures for acid etch inspections of the TEC wall between and on either side of the "R" and "S" rails in the engine mount lug area (top quadrant of the case) for the presence of weld material, and if that material is detected, removal from service and replacement with serviceable parts.

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other products of this same type design, the proposed AD would require, at the next removal of the TEC from the low pressure turbine case "P" flange for maintenance after the effective date of this AD, a one-time acid etch inspection of TEC wall between and on either side of the "R" and "S" rails in the engine mount lug area (top quadrant of the case) for the presence of weld material, and if that material is detected, removal from service and replacement with serviceable parts. The actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the ASBs described previously.

There are approximately 2,720 engines of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 1,125 engines installed on aircraft of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 1.4 work hours per engine to accomplish the proposed actions, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$94,500.

The regulations proposed herein would not have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this proposal would not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this proposed regulation: (1) Is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not

a "significant rule" under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) if promulgated, will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. A copy of the draft regulatory evaluation prepared for this action is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained by contacting the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption ADDRESSES.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration proposes to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) as follows:

PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. Section 39.13 is amended by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

Pratt & Whitney: Docket No. 98-ANE-21-AD.

Applicability: Pratt & Whitney (PW) Models JT9D-7, -7A, -7H, -7AH, -7F, -7J, -20, -20J, -7Q, -7Q3, -59A, -70A, and -7R4D turbofan engines. These engines are installed on but not limited to Boeing 747 and 767 series, McDonnell Douglas DC-10 series, and Airbus Industrie A300 and A310 series aircraft.

Note 1: This airworthiness directive (AD) applies to each engine identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For engines that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (b) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and, if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent turbine exhaust case (TEC) structural failure under abnormal operating conditions, which could result in reduced main mount load capability, which could

result in an engine separating from the wing and subsequent loss of control of the aircraft, accomplish the following:

(a) At the next removal of the TEC from the low pressure turbine case "P" flange for maintenance after the effective date of this AD, accomplish the following in accordance with PW Alert Service Bulletin (ASB) No. JT9D-A6322, Revision 1, dated March 19, 1998, or ASB No. JT9D-7R4-A72-546, Revision 1, dated March 19, 1998, as applicable:

(1) Perform a one-time acid etch inspection of TEC wall between and on either side of the "R" and "S" rails in the engine mount lug area (top quadrant of the case) for the presence of weld material.

(2) If weld material is found, remove from service the TEC and replace with a serviceable part.

(b) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, Engine Certification Office. Operators shall submit their request through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Engine Certification Office.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this airworthiness directive, if any, may be obtained from the Engine Certification Office.

(c) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the aircraft to a location where the inspection requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Issued in Burlington, Massachusetts, on April 29, 1998.

Thomas A. Boudreau,

Acting Manager, Engine and Propeller Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98-12062 Filed 5-6-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-SW-43-AD]

Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France SA 330F, G, and J Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to Eurocopter France Model SA 330F, G, and J helicopters. This proposal would require removal and replacement of each tail rotor electrical bonding braid (bonding braid). This proposal is prompted by one in-service report of