

# 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. 97-ANE-05-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

#### Airworthiness Directives; Pratt & Whitney JT8D Series Turbofan Engines

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

**SUMMARY:** The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) proposes to supersede an existing airworthiness directive (AD), that is applicable to Pratt & Whitney JT8D-1, -1A, -1B, -7, -7A, -7B, -9, -9A, -11, -15, -15A, -17, -17A, -17R, and -17AR turbofan engines. That AD currently requires a determination of the utilization rate and protective coating type of the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th stage high pressure compressor (HPC) disks, and removal, inspection for corrosion, and recoating of those HPC disks based on utilization rate. This proposal would require removal and replacement of protective coating of 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th stage HPC disks, initial and repetitive inspections for corrosion pits and cracks, and removal from service as required. This proposal is prompted by operator reports of cracks found on several JT8D steel HPC disks since the existing AD was published. The actions specified in the proposed AD are intended to prevent fracture of the HPC disks, which can result in uncontained release of engine fragments, inflight engine shutdown, and airframe damage.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by March 25, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), New England Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-ANE-05-AD, 12 New England Executive Park,

Burlington, MA 01803-5299. Comments may be inspected at this location, by appointment, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Comments may also be sent via the Internet using the following address: "9-ane-adcomment@faa.gov". Comments sent via the Internet must contain the docket number in the subject line.

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, by appointment, at the FAA, New England Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Christopher Spinney, Aerospace Engineer, Engine Certification Office, FAA, Engine and Propeller Directorate, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803-5299; telephone (781) 238-7175; 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 action 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 action must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following

statement is made: "Comments to Docket Number 97-ANE-05-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

#### Availability of NPRM's

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. 97-ANE-05-AD, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803-5299.

#### Discussion

On May 29, 1998, the FAA issued AD 98-12-07, Amendment 39-10563 (63 FR 31340, June 9, 1998), to supersede AD 94-20-01, Amendment 39-9020 (59 FR 49175, September 27, 1994). AD 98-12-07 requires a determination of the utilization rate and protective coating type of the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th stage HPC disks, and removal, inspection for corrosion, and recoating of those HPC disks based on utilization rate, and shortens the inspection interval for certain low utilization disks. That action was prompted by a report of an additional uncontained 9th stage HPC disk failure due to corrosion pitting. That condition, if not corrected, could result in uncontained release of engine fragments, inflight engine shutdown, and airframe damage.

Since that AD was issued, operators have found cracks on various JT8D steel HPC disks. Some of these cracks originate in the tierod hole area of the disk. The inspection intervals in AD 98-12-07 do not account for risk of fractures originating from tierod hole areas. This proposal is a result of a complete re-assessment of the risks associated with a disk fracture due to a corrosion pit. Since the tierod hole corrosion does not correlate well with the utilization rate of the disks, that calculation has been eliminated from the proposal. Also, because the thin-webbed 9th stage disk represents a higher risk of fracture than other part numbers, a tighter inspection interval has been assigned to those parts.

#### Manufacturer's Service Information

The FAA has reviewed and approved the technical contents of Pratt & Whitney Alert Service Bulletin (ASB) No. A6431, dated November 27, 2002, that describes procedures for initial and repetitive inspections to detect corrosion on HPC disks, and removal