

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: The FAA proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Pratt & Whitney Canada (PWC) PT6A-60A and PT6A-65B turboprop engines. This proposed AD would require replacing Woodward propeller governor assemblies, part number (P/N) 8210-212H. This proposed AD is prompted by six incidents during airplane acceptance flight testing where directional control of the airplane was difficult to maintain during landing. The actions specified in this proposed AD are intended to prevent loss of directional control and damage to the airplane.

DATES: We must receive any comments on this proposed AD by August 18, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Use one of the following addresses to submit comments on this proposed AD:

- *By mail:* Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), New England Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2003-NE-09-AD, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803-5299.

- *By fax:* (781) 238-7055.

- *By e-mail:* 9-ane-adcomment@faa.gov.

You may get the service information identified in this proposed AD from Pratt & Whitney Canada, 1000 Marie-Victorin, Longueuil, Quebec, Canada J4G1A1.

You may examine the AD docket at the FAA, New England Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ian Dargin, Aerospace Engineer, Engine Certification Office, FAA, Engine and Propeller Directorate, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803-5299; telephone (781) 238-7178; fax (781) 238-7199.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

We invite you to submit any written relevant data, views, or arguments regarding this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under **ADDRESSES**. Include "AD Docket No. 2003-NE-09-AD" in the subject line of your comments. If you want us to acknowledge receipt of your mailed comments, send us a self-addressed, stamped postcard with the docket number written on it; we will date-stamp your postcard and mail it back to you. We specifically invite comments on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the proposed AD. If a person contacts us

through a nonwritten communication, and that contact relates to a substantive part of this proposed AD, we will summarize the contact and place the summary in the docket. We will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend the proposed AD in light of those comments.

We are reviewing the writing style we currently use in regulatory documents. We are interested in your comments on whether the style of this document is clear, and your suggestions to improve the clarity of our communications that affect you. You may get more information about plain language at <http://www.plainlanguage.gov>.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD Docket (including any comments and service information), by appointment, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. See **ADDRESSES** for the location.

Discussion

Transport Canada, which is the airworthiness authority for Canada, recently notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on PWC PT6A-60A and PT6A-65B turbofan engines. Transport Canada advises the FAA that there have been six reports from the airplane manufacturer that it was difficult to maintain directional control of the airplane during landing. These events were reported to have occurred during airplane acceptance flight testing. Certain governors that incorporate propeller control units (PCUs) with thicker O-rings on the Beta valve shafts of the PCUs may not set the appropriate ground idle blade angle when the airplane lands. If this happens on one engine only, a substantial and unexpected asymmetric thrust condition will occur.

The introduction of a thicker O-ring on the Beta valve shaft of the PCU addressed a nuisance oil leakage issue. A side effect of fitting this thicker O-ring is that a slightly higher input force is required to move the Beta valve to the ground idle position. On the installations using the PT6A-60A and PT6A-65B engines, the airframe installations have a solenoid system that relies on the force of an internal spring within the Beta valve to move the valve to the ground idle command position. The force of this spring is insufficient to overcome the increased friction of the thicker O-ring and ensure that the valve consistently and promptly moves to the ground idle position. As a result, the pilot may experience directional control problems during landing. There have

been no reports of in-service incidents to date. The actions specified in this proposed AD are intended to prevent loss of directional control and damage to the airplane.

This proposed AD is not applicable to engine models operating with the Woodward propeller governor, P/N 8210-212J, since they operate with a push-pull rod mechanism to move the Beta valve. That arrangement provides ample force to overcome the O-ring's frictional resistance.

Relevant Service Information

PWC has issued Service Bulletin (SB) PT6A-72-13354, dated July 6, 2001. That SB provides information for the removal, replacement, or modification of Woodward propeller governor assembly, P/N 8210-212H. Transport Canada classified this SB as mandatory and issued airworthiness directive CF-2002-02, dated January 15, 2002, in order to ensure the airworthiness of these PWC engines in Canada.

Differences Between This Proposed AD and the Manufacturer's Service Information

Although the SB recommends the removal, replacement or modification of Woodward propeller governor assemblies, P/N 8210-212H, when the engine is disassembled and access is available to the necessary subassembly (i.e. module, accessories, components, or build groups), this proposed AD would require compliance at the next access or within six months after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs first.

FAA's Determination and Requirements of the Proposed AD

These PT6A-60A and PT6A-65B engine models, manufactured in Canada, are type-certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of section 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, Transport Canada has kept us informed of the situation described above. We have examined Transport Canada's findings, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design that are certificated for operation in the United States. Therefore, we are proposing this AD, which would require replacing Woodward propeller governor assemblies, P/N 8210-212H.