

# Proposed Rules

Federal Register

Vol. 68, No. 172

Friday, September 5, 2003

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. 2003-NE-34-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

#### Airworthiness Directives; Pratt & Whitney JT9D-3A, -7, -7A, -7AH, -7H, -7F, -7J, -20, and -20J Turbofan Engines

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

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

**SUMMARY:** The FAA proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Pratt & Whitney (PW) JT9D-3A, -7, -7A, -7AH, -7H, -7F, -7J, -20, and -20J turbofan engines. This proposed AD would clarify a life limit for certain part numbers of 6th stage low pressure turbine (LPT) air seals, and require their removal from service before accumulating 15,000 cycles-since-new (CSN). This proposed AD is prompted by reports of certain 6th stage LPT air seals possibly not being life tracked due to confusion from updates to the engine manuals. We are proposing this AD to prevent failure of the 6th stage LPT air seal, which could cause LPT damage resulting in an uncontained engine failure.

**DATES:** We must receive any comments on this proposed AD by November 4, 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-34-AD, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803-5299.

- By fax: (781) 238-7055.

- By e-mail: [9-adcomment@faa.gov](mailto:9-adcomment@faa.gov).

You can get the service information identified in this proposed AD from

Pratt & Whitney, 400 Main St., East Hartford, CT 06108; telephone (860) 565-8770; fax (860) 565-4503.

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:

Keith Lardie, Aerospace Engineer, Engine Certification Office, FAA, Engine & Propeller Directorate, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803-5299; telephone (781) 238-7189; 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-34-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 verbally, 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.faa.gov/language> and <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

The FAA has recently been made aware that the life limit for 6th stage

LPT air seals, part numbers (P/Ns) 808846, 809171, 811260 and 811261, may not be clearly stated in Chapter 5 of the engine manuals. Proper life tracking of these parts is required to ensure safe operation of engines, but because of changes to the engine manuals some operators may have believed that some 6th stage LPT air seals may not require life tracking. This condition, if not corrected, could result in failure of the 6th stage LPT air seal, which could cause LPT damage resulting in an uncontained engine failure.

##### Relevant Service Information

We have reviewed and approved the technical contents of PW Service Bulletin No. JT9D 6448, dated June 10, 2003, that describes procedures for calculating 6th stage LPT air seal part life for air seals that have not been previously life tracked.

##### FAA's Determination and Requirements of the Proposed AD

We have evaluated all pertinent information and identified an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on other products of this same type design. Therefore, we are proposing this AD, which would clarify the life limit for 6th stage LPT air seals, P/Ns 808846, 809171, 811260, and 811261, and require their removal from service before accumulating 15,000 CSN. The proposed AD would require you to use the service information described previously for calculating 6th stage LPT air seal part life for parts that have not been previously life tracked.

##### Changes to 14 CFR Part 39—Effect on the Proposed AD

On July 10, 2002, we published a new version of 14 CFR part 39 (67 FR 47997, July 22, 2002), which governs the FAA's AD system. This regulation now includes material that relates to altered products, special flight permits, and alternative methods of compliance. This material previously was included in each individual AD. Since this material is included in 14 CFR part 39, we will not include it in future AD actions.

##### Costs of Compliance

There are about 1,024 engines of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. We estimate that 367 engines installed on airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD. We also