

holders and suppliers that manufacture high energy rotating gas turbine engine components to voluntarily submit information for inclusion into the ROMAN database.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before March 13, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Send or deliver all comments on the proposed Order to: Docket Management System (DMS), US Department of Transportation, Plaza Level Room 401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dan Kerman, Aviation Safety Inspector-Manufacturing Process Specialist, Manufacturing Inspection Office, ANE-180, Engine and Propeller Directorate, Federal Aviation Administration, New England Region, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01802, telephone 781-238-7195; fax (781) 238-7898.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to comment on the proposed Order listed in this notice by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they desire to the Docket Management System (DMS), US Department of Transportation, Plaza Level Room 401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001. You should submit two copies of your comments, identifying the docket number "FAA-2003-14374" at the beginning of your comments. If you wish to receive confirmation that your comments were received, include a stamped, self-addressed postcard with your comments. Comments may also be submitted through the DMS Internet address at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Comments received on the proposed Order may be examined, before and after the comment closing date, in person, in the Docket Office between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The Docket Office is on the Plaza Level of the NASSIF Building, Department of Transportation at the above address. Comments received may also be examined on the Internet at <http://dms.dot.gov>. The Associate Administrator for Regulation and Certification will consider all comments received on or before the closing date before issuing the final Order.

Background

Under 49 U.S.C. 40123, Congress authorized the FAA to establish rules that it could designate as protected from disclosure to the public certain voluntarily provided safety and security information. In so doing, Congress

sought to encourage persons with knowledge of safety and security issues to voluntarily provide that information and data to the FAA. The aviation industry had expressed reluctance to voluntarily provide the FAA with safety and security information out of concern that the agency would be forced to make those submissions public in response to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552) and other laws.

In 14 CFR part 193 (66 FR 33792, June 25, 2001) the FAA established the requirements for designating as protected from mandatory disclosure certain voluntarily submitted information. Before the information can be protected from disclosure however, the FAA must issue an order finding that the information meets the criteria established in 14 CFR part 193. Once the FAA issues an order designating information as protected under 14 CFR part 193, that information will not be disclosed in response to requests made under the FOIA or other laws except as provided for in 14 CFR 193.9. Thus, this proposed order is issued under the provisions of 14 CFR 193.11, which sets out the "notice procedure" for designating information as protected.

Description of the Information Sharing Program

The Aerospace Industries Association (AIA) established an international team of representatives from production approval holders (PAHs), and companies, that supply critical rotating parts to those PAHs to investigate the causal factors that have led to manufacturing induced anomalies in high energy rotating parts of commercial jet engines. The team's charter is to develop a database containing manufacturing induced anomalies in critical rotating parts for aircraft engines, including information on design data that could impact the life-limits of those parts.

Rotating parts, such as disks, in aircraft engines are exposed to extreme temperatures, pressures, and rotational forces. Under those conditions, any anomaly in the material matrix of the part could serve as a site for a crack to initiate. Rotating parts failures resulting from cracks originating from such anomalies have in the past caused aircraft accidents resulting in substantial damage and loss of life. With this database, the team's hopes are to outline recommendations for establishing best manufacturing practices for the fabrication of high-energy rotating engine components. This knowledge will also enable the entire engine industry to identify the

precursors to unsafe conditions and to react appropriately in a safe and timely fashion. The report may also be used as a means of identifying shortfalls in existing FAA rules, standards, and policies regarding aircraft engine production and design approvals and for the continuing airworthiness oversight of engine designs currently in service.

The FAA supports this effort as part of the Safer Skies Program, and has agreed to serve as the clearinghouse for the database information submitted by PAHs and suppliers. If implemented, the ROMAN database would be created in a double blind format from data submitted by engine PAHs and suppliers consisting of a very sensitive and proprietary nature. PAHs and suppliers will not share this data with the FAA voluntarily, unless each submitter can do so anonymously, and has assurances that the data they submit would not be disclosed to the public, or to other submitters. With this data, it would be possible for the FAA to identify trends by analyzing adverse experiences on a fleet-wide basis. Such comparisons are not possible today because there are no participants willing to share such sensitive data with other members of industry, or the FAA, without assurances of protection from disclosure. However, the team members are willing to submit in a de-identified form, to allow the FAA and others on the team access to the data, only if the FAA provides assurances that the data will be protected from disclosure to the public. The proposed order protecting the submitted data under 14 CFR part 193 will provide those assurances. By compiling all submissions into a single database, each participant would benefit from defining best manufacturing practices, identifying adverse trends, and improved production efficiency. The flying public would benefit from improved reliability of aircraft engines and a reduction of the severity of the consequences of anomalies regarding integrity of the engine by, for example, the implementation of damage tolerance design methodologies.

The data will be submitted to the FAA anonymously by the participants. These submissions, initially, will include historical data from past years. In the future, the updating of the database will include only recently derived data. The FAA will secure a contractor that will input the data into a computerized database, and that database will be available for review by the participants and the FAA for establishing industry wide cause and corrective action. The computer database will be double blind and thus will not include the names of