

Metco 58 blade root coating as an optional terminating action. The actions specified by this proposed AD are intended to detect cracks in LPC fan blade roots, which if not detected, could lead to uncontained multiple fan blade failure, and damage to the airplane.

DATES: Comments must be received by April 21, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), New England Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2000-NE-13-AD, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803-5299. Comments may be inspected at this location, by appointment, between 8:00 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 Rolls-Royce plc, PO Box 31, Derby, England, DE248BJ; telephone: 011-44-1332-242-424; fax: 011-44-1332-249-936. 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: James Lawrence, Aerospace Engineer, Engine Certification Office, FAA, Engine and Propeller Directorate, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803-5299; telephone: (781) 238-7176; 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 2000-NE-13-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. 2000-NE-13-AD, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803-5299.

Discussion

A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to add an airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to RR plc RB211-535E4-37, RB211-535E4-B-37, and RB211-535E4-B-75 series turbofan engines, was published as an NPRM in the **Federal Register** on August 9, 2001 (66 FR 41808). That NPRM would have required initial and repetitive ultrasonic inspections of LPC fan blade roots for cracks, and relubrication of LPC fan blades before reinstallation. That NPRM was prompted by the discovery of cracks on LPC fan blade roots during an engine overhaul. That condition, if not corrected, could result in uncontained multiple fan blade failure, and damage to the airplane.

The FAA received the following comments on the initial NPRM. The latest revision to RR Mandatory Service Bulletin (MSB) RB.211-72-C879, Revision 3, dated October 9, 2002, addresses those comments.

Two commenters request the incorporation of Metco 58 blade root coating as a terminating action to the AD inspection requirements.

The FAA agrees. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), which is the airworthiness authority for the United Kingdom (UK), has notified the FAA that incorporation of Metco 58 blade root coating using RR Service Bulletin (SB) RB.211-72-C946, dated August 6, 2002, is considered a terminating action to the inspections. The FAA has examined the information provided by RR and the CAA and agrees with the conclusions. Incorporation of Metco 58 blade root coating has been added to the proposed AD as a terminating action.

One commenter requests a draw down inspection schedule for engines that

have not previously had repetitive inspections. The commenter states that due to the age of its fleet, it would be difficult to do repetitive inspections in accordance with the AD.

The FAA does not agree with the request due to the potential safety hazard associated with a possible multiple fan blade release. However, RR MSB RB211-72-C879, Revision 3, dated October 9, 2002, allows an alternative on-wing ultrasonic inspection method.

Since the above comments expand the scope of the originally proposed rule, the FAA has determined that it is necessary to reopen the comment period to provide additional opportunity for public comment.

Manufacturer's Service Information

RR has issued MSB RB.211-72-C879, Revision 3, dated October 9, 2002, that specifies ultrasonic inspection of high cyclic life blades on-wing with either the LPC fan blades in place or removed from the LPC. The CAA classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued AD 002-01-2000 in order to ensure the airworthiness of these RR engines in the UK.

Bilateral Agreement Information

These engines are manufactured in the United Kingdom (UK), and 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, the CAA has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the CAA, 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.

FAA's Determination of an Unsafe Condition and Proposed Actions

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other RR RB211-535E4 series turbofan engines of the same type design, that are used on Boeing 757 airplanes registered in the United States, the proposed AD would require initial and repetitive ultrasonic inspections of LPC fan blade roots on-wing and during overhaul, and relubrication, according to accumulated life cycles.

Economic Analysis

There are approximately 1,021 engines of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 545 engines installed on aircraft of U.S.