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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98-ANE-09-AD; Amendment 39-10508; AD 98-09-27]

RIN 2120-AA64

#### Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce, plc RB211 Trent 768 and 772 Series Turbofan Engines

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to Rolls-Royce, plc RB211 Trent 768 and 772 series turbofan engines. This action requires initial and repetitive visual inspections of thrust reverser hinge lugs and attachment ribs for cracks, and, if necessary, removal from service and replacement with serviceable parts. This amendment is prompted by aircraft certification testing which revealed that stresses on the thrust reverser hinge were higher than had been anticipated during engine certification. The actions specified in this AD are intended to prevent thrust reverser hinge failure, possibly resulting in liberation of the thrust reverser cowl duct from the engine nacelle, which could result in impact damage to other sections of the aircraft.

**DATES:** Effective May 21, 1998.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of May 21, 1998.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before July 6, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation

Administration (FAA), New England Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98-ANE-09-AD, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803-5299. Comments may also be sent via the Internet using the following address: "9-ad-engineprop@faa.dot.gov". Comments sent via the Internet must contain the docket number in the subject line.

The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Rolls-Royce North America, Inc., 2001 South Tibbs Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46241; telephone (317) 230-3995, fax (317) 230-4743. This information may be examined at the FAA, New England Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

**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:** The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), which is the airworthiness authority for the United Kingdom (UK), recently notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on Rolls-Royce, plc (R-R) RB211 Trent 768 and 772 series turbofan engines.

The CAA advises that test measurements of the pylon to thrust reverser cowl duct hinge loads revealed lower than expected hinge lug load carrying capability. In the event of failure of one of the thrust reverser cowl duct hinges, there is a reduced fatigue life capability on the adjacent hinge. This could lead to premature failure of the thrust reverser cowl duct hinges, resulting in liberation of the cowl duct from the aircraft. There are currently no affected engines operated on aircraft of U.S. registry. This AD, then, is necessary to require accomplishment of the required actions for engines installed on aircraft currently of foreign registry that may someday be imported into the U.S. Accordingly, the FAA has determined that notice and prior opportunity for comment are unnecessary and good cause exists for making this amendment effective in less than 30 days. This condition, if not corrected, could result in thrust reverser hinge failure, possibly resulting in

liberation of the thrust reverser cowl duct from the engine nacelle, which could result in impact damage to other sections of the aircraft.

R-R has issued Service Bulletin (SB) No. RB.211-78-B115, Revision 1, dated March 14, 1997, that specifies procedures for visual inspections of thrust reverser hinge lugs and attachment ribs for cracks. The CAA classified this SB as mandatory and issued AD 008-03-97 in order to assure the airworthiness of these engines in the UK.

This engine model is manufactured in the UK and is 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.

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other engines of the same type design registered in the United States, this AD requires initial and repetitive visual inspections of thrust reverser hinge lugs and attachment ribs for cracks, and, if necessary, removal from service and replacement with serviceable parts. The actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the SB described previously.

Since a situation exists that requires the immediate adoption of this regulation, it is found that notice and opportunity for prior public comment hereon are impracticable, and that good cause exists for making this amendment effective in less than 30 days.

#### Comments Invited

Although this action is in the form of a final rule that involves requirements affecting flight safety and, thus, was not preceded by notice and an opportunity for public comment, comments are invited on this rule. Interested persons are invited to comment on this 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 under the caption **ADDRESSES**. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments will be considered, and this rule may be amended in light of the comments received. Factual information that supports the commenter's ideas and suggestions is extremely helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the AD action and determining whether additional rulemaking action would be needed.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the rule that might suggest a need to modify the 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 that summarizes each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this AD will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this notice must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket Number 98-ANE-09-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

The regulations adopted herein will not have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this final rule does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

The FAA has determined that this regulation is an emergency regulation that must be issued immediately to correct an unsafe condition in aircraft, and is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866. It has been determined further that this action involves an emergency regulation

under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979). If it is determined that this emergency regulation otherwise would be significant under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures, a final regulatory evaluation will be prepared and placed in the Rules Docket. A copy of it, if filed, may be obtained from the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

**List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39**

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

**Adoption of the Amendment**

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) as follows:

**PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES**

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

**Authority:** 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

**§ 39.13 [Amended]**

2. Section 39.13 is amended by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

**98-09-27 Rolls-Royce, plc:** Amendment 39-10508. Docket 98-ANE-09-AD.

**Applicability:** Rolls-Royce, plc (R-R) RB211 Trent 768 and 772 series turbofan engines, installed on but not limited to the Airbus A330-341 and A330-342 series aircraft.

**Note 1:** This airworthiness directive (AD) applies to each engine identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For engines that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (b) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification,

alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and, if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

**Compliance:** Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent thrust reverser hinge failure, possibly resulting in liberation of the thrust reverser cowl duct from the engine nacelle, which could result in impact damage to other sections of the aircraft, accomplish the following:

(a) Perform initial and repetitive visual inspections of thrust reverser hinge lugs and attachment ribs for cracks, and, if necessary, remove from service and replace with serviceable parts, in accordance with R-R Service Bulletin (SB) No. RB.211-78-B115, Revision 1, dated March 14, 1997, as follows:

- (1) Perform the initial inspection at the earlier of the following:
  - (i) 250 hours time in service (TIS) after the effective date of this AD; or
  - (ii) 1,200 flight cycles since new (CSN).
- (2) Thereafter, perform visual inspections at intervals not to exceed 1,200 flight cycles in service (CIS) since last inspection.

(3) If thrust reverser hinge lugs or attachment ribs are found cracked, remove from service and replace with serviceable parts, in accordance with R-R Service Bulletin (SB) No. RB.211-78-B115, Revision 1, dated March 14, 1997.

(b) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, Engine Certification Office. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Engine Certification Office.

**Note 2:** Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this airworthiness directive, if any, may be obtained from the Engine Certification Office.

(c) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the aircraft to a location where the inspection requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

(d) The actions required by this AD shall be performed in accordance with the following R-R SB:

Document No.	Pages	Revision	Date
RB.211-78-B115 .....	1-6	1	March 14, 1997.
Total pages: 6.			

This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies may be obtained from Rolls-Royce North America, Inc., 2001 South Tibbs Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46241; telephone (317) 230-3995, fax (317) 230-4743. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, New England Region, Office of the Regional

Counsel, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

(e) This amendment becomes effective on May 21, 1998.

Issued in Burlington, Massachusetts, on April 23, 1998.

**Jay J. Pardee,**  
*Manager, Engine and Propeller Directorate,*  
*Aircraft Certification Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-11437 Filed 5-5-98; 8:45 am]

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