



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2021-0347; Project Identifier AD-2020-01610-E]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; General Electric Company 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 all General Electric Company GE90-110B1 and GE90-115B model turbofan engines. This proposed AD was prompted by an in-service occurrence of loss of engine thrust control resulting in uncommanded high thrust. This proposed AD would require initial and repetitive replacement of the full authority digital engine control (FADEC) integrated circuit (MN4) microprocessor. The FAA is proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: The FAA must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- Fax: (202) 493-2251.
- Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.
- Hand Delivery: Deliver to Mail address above between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For service information identified in this NPRM, contact General Electric Company, 1 Neumann Way, Cincinnati, OH 45215; phone: (513) 552-3272; email:

aviation.fleetsupport@ae.ge.com; website: www.ge.com. You may view this service information at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 1200 District Avenue, Burlington, MA 01803. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (781) 238-7759.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0347; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this NPRM, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations is listed above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stephen Elwin, Aviation Safety Engineer, ECO Branch, FAA, 1200 District Avenue, Burlington, MA 01803; phone: (781) 238-7236; fax: (781) 238-7199; email: stephen.l.elwin@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

The FAA invites you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under ADDRESSES. Include “Docket No. FAA-2021-0347; Project Identifier AD-2020-01610-E” at the beginning of your comments. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. The FAA will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposal because of those comments.

Except for Confidential Business Information (CBI) as described in the following paragraph, and other information as described in 14 CFR 11.35, the FAA will post all comments received, without change, to <https://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. The agency will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact received about this NPRM.

Confidential Business Information

CBI is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C.

552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this NPRM contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this NPRM, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Please mark each page of your submission containing CBI as "PROPIN." The FAA will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the FOIA, and they will not be placed in the public docket of this NPRM. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Stephen Elwin, Aviation Safety Engineer, ECO Branch, FAA, 1200 District Avenue, Burlington, MA 01803. Any commentary that the FAA receives which is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this rulemaking.

Background

The FAA received a report from the manufacturer of an in-service loss of engine thrust control that occurred on October 27, 2019, resulting in uncommanded high thrust. Analysis by the manufacturer found accumulated thermal cycles of the MN4 integrated circuit in the FADEC, through normal operation, causes the solder ball joints to wear out and eventually fail over time. The FAA published AD 2020-20-17 (85 FR 63443, dated October 8, 2020) to prohibit dispatch of an airplane if certain status messages are displayed on the engine indicating and crew alerting system and if certain conditions are present per the manufacturer's service information. As a terminating action, AD 2020-20-17 also requires revision of the existing FAA-approved minimum equipment list (MEL) by incorporating into the MEL the dispatch restrictions listed in this AD. Since that AD, the manufacturer published GE GE90-100 Service Bulletin (S/B) 73-0118 R00, dated November 6, 2020, and Revision 01, dated April 27, 2021, to replace the FADEC MN4 microprocessor and solder. This condition, if not addressed, could result in loss of engine thrust control and reduced control of the airplane.

FAA's Determination

The FAA is issuing this NPRM after determining that the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

Related Service Information under 1 CFR Part 51

The FAA reviewed GE GE90-100 S/B 73-0118, Revision 01, dated April 27, 2021. This S/B specifies procedures for replacing the FADEC MN4 microprocessor. This service information is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in ADDRESSES.

Proposed AD Requirements in this NPRM

This proposed AD would require initial and repetitive replacement of the FADEC MN4 microprocessor using an approved overhaul procedure.

Interim Action

The FAA considers that this proposed AD would be an interim action. If final action is later identified, the FAA will consider further rulemaking.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD, if adopted as proposed, would affect 311 engines installed on airplanes of U.S. registry.

The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this proposed AD:

Estimated costs

Action	Labor Cost	Parts Cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Replace the FADEC MN4 microprocessor	1 work-hour x \$85 per hour = \$85	\$25,200	\$25,285	\$7,863,635

The FAA has included all known costs in its cost estimate. According to the manufacturer, however, some of the costs of this proposed AD may be covered under warranty, thereby reducing the cost impact on affected operators.

Authority for this Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

The FAA is issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements. Under that section, Congress

charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

The FAA determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect 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.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:

- (1) Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866,
- (2) Would not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and
- (3) Would not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

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

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 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. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

General Electric Company: Docket No. FAA-2021-0347; Project Identifier AD-2020-01610-E.

(a) Comments Due Date

The FAA must receive comments on this airworthiness directive (AD) by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to General Electric Company (GE) GE90-110B1 and GE90-115B model turbofan engines.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft System Component (JASC) Code 7600, Engine Controls.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by an in-service occurrence of loss of engine thrust control resulting in uncommanded high thrust. The FAA is issuing this AD to prevent failure of the FADEC MN4 microprocessor solder ball. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in loss of engine thrust control and reduced control of the airplane.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Required Actions

(1) Within the following compliance times after the effective date of this AD, replace the full authority digital engine control (FADEC) integrated circuit (MN4) microprocessor using an approved overhaul procedure:

(i) For a FADEC MN4 microprocessor with 10,500 or more cycles since new (CSN), replace the FADEC MN4 microprocessor before accumulating 500 additional cycles on the FADEC MN4 microprocessor.

(ii) For a FADEC MN4 microprocessor with 5,000 CSN or more, but fewer than 10,500 CSN, replace the FADEC MN4 microprocessor at the next FADEC component shop visit or before accumulating 11,000 CSN on the FADEC MN4 microprocessor, whichever occurs first.

(2) Thereafter, repeat the replacement of the FADEC MN4 microprocessor at the first FADEC component shop visit after accumulating 5,000 CSN since the last replacement but before accumulating 11,000 CSN since the last replacement.

(h) Installation Prohibition

After the effective date of this AD, do not install onto any engine any FADEC with a main channel board that was subject to more than three replacements of the FADEC MN4 microprocessor.

(i) Definition

(1) For the purpose of this AD, an “approved overhaul procedure” is one of the following:

(i) Replacement of the FADEC MN4 microprocessor using FADEC International-approved maintenance procedures; or

(ii) Replacement of the FADEC MN4 microprocessor using the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraph 3.A., of GE GE90-100 Service Bulletin 73-0118, Revision 01, dated April 27, 2021.

(2) For the purpose of this AD, a “FADEC component shop visit” is the induction of the FADEC into a repair facility to perform internal maintenance on the FADEC.

(j) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, ECO Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the manager of the certification office, send it to the attention of the person identified in Related Information. You may email your request to: ANE-AD-AMOC@faa.gov.

(2) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(k) Related Information

(1) For more information about this AD, contact Stephen Elwin, Aviation Safety Engineer, ECO Branch, FAA, 1200 District Avenue, Burlington, MA 01803; phone: (781) 238-7236; fax: (781) 238-7199; email: stephen.l.elwin@faa.gov.

(2) For service information identified in this AD, contact General Electric Company, 1 Neumann Way, Cincinnati, OH 45215; phone: (513) 552-3272; email: aviation.fleetsupport@ae.ge.com; website: www.ge.com. You may view this referenced service information at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 1200 District Avenue, Burlington, MA 01803. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (781) 238-7759.

Issued on April 28, 2021.

Lance T. Gant, Director,
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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