



DREAMLINER'S BIGGEST OPERATOR TO MODIFY 100 ROLLS-ROYCE ENGINES AFTER SHUTDOWNS

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ANA, Japan's largest airline, will modify all 100 Rolls-Royce engines on its fleet of Boeing 787 Dreamliners following three engine failures this year caused by corrosion and cracking of turbine blades.

ANA, the world's largest 787 operator, said all 100 engines on its 50 787s will be fitted with new blades, a process that could take up to three years, reiterating a plan announced on Tuesday in Japan.

"By replacement we mean taking the engines off the 787s, replacing the faulty turbine blades and then putting those engines back on the aircraft," an ANA spokesman said on Thursday in Tokyo. "We are not replacing the 787 engines with new ones," he clarified

ANA has five engines that currently need repairs, "but we will replace all the 100 engines for enhanced safety measures," the company said, adding that it had already repaired three engines.

A Rolls-Royce spokesman said the engine maker would swap out existing blades for new ones on

ANA's planes in the short term. Rolls has started production of a new blade design that will be ready by year end, he said.

"We are working very closely with ANA," the Rolls spokesman Richard Wray said.

The new blade will be incorporated next year into engines going onto new 787s, Mr Wray said, adding that other airlines are managing the issue with "ongoing maintenance."

The Rolls-Royce chief executive Warren East said on Tuesday that ANA's problem was a "manageable issue." He added that ANA's "intensive" use of the engines had caused the blades to wear more quickly than usual.

ANA said the first engine failure happened on a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Tokyo in February. A second flight in March and a third in August had similar problems.

On Wednesday, ANA said four 787s remained grounded and that it had cancelled 18 domestic flights due to the engine problem. The airline said it expected no further cancellations through mid-September. Beyond that its schedule had not been finalised.

The Rolls-Royce Trent 1000 engine, one of two engines for the Boeing 787 jetliner, costs about US\$20 million at list price. General Electric makes the other 787 engine, known as the GENx.

Boeing's 787, built with lightweight carbon-fibre wings and fuselage, is a technological leap forward and burns 20 per cent less fuel than the jets it replaces. But it was three years late coming to market and regulators grounded the fleet in 2013 after its lithium batteries overheated and burned.

Boeing has delivered about 445 of the planes, which seat 242 to 290 passengers and cost \$225m to \$265m at list price.

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