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Information for Operators

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An InFO contains valuable information for operators that should help them meet certain administrative, regulatory, or operational requirements with relatively low urgency or impact on safety.

Subject: Separation of the Engine-Fan Cowl on Certain Aircraft During Flight

Purpose: This InFO contains information and recommendations concerning the separation of the engine-fan cowls on certain aircraft during flight. It is based on National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) safety recommendations A-08-080 and A-08-081.

Background: On August 4, 2008, while in-flight, a Bombardier CL-600-2B19, lost part of its right-engine-upper-fan cowl. The subsequent investigation by the NTSB revealed that the right-engine-upper-fan cowl was not properly fastened following recent engine maintenance. In another similar event, which occurred on May 6, 2008, an Airbus A319-132, lost the left-engine-outboard-fan cowl while in-flight. The subsequent investigation revealed that the engine-fan-cowl latches were not properly fastened following recent engine maintenance.

Discussion: The issue of engine-fan cowl separation has been an ongoing problem. Records reviewed from Bombardier, Airbus, foreign investigations, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) found that, since 1992, there have been 15 events involving Airbus single-aisle airplanes. Bombardier revealed 33 domestic and foreign cases of engine-fan cowl separations, dating back to January 2001, including 6 cases in 2007 alone. Despite the release of an FAA airworthiness directive (AD) for Airbus single aisle airplanes and numerous bulletins for Airbus single aisle and Bombardier CL-600-2B19 model airplanes, engine-fan cowl separations have continued to occur.

Recommended Action: Air Carriers who operate Airbus single aisle A319-132 and Bombardier CL-600-2B19 model airplanes are recommended to develop a training program for maintenance personnel and flightcrews on inspection procedures to verify that the engine-fan's cowl to be latched. It is also recommended to revise their procedures to require maintenance personnel to inform flightcrews when engine-fan cowls have been opened before flight.