



Aircraft Grounded Because of COVID-19 Could Develop Engine Problems; FAA Orders Inspections

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recently issued warnings about a potential safety risk to aircraft grounded by the global pandemic.

On July 24, 2020, the FAA required airlines to inspect the engines of Boeing 737 aircraft not currently in use. The issue is possible valve corrosion that, the agency believes, could cause the engines to shut down without warning.

Airlines have grounded large portions of their aircraft fleets because of a lack of demand due to COVID-19. The order centers around about 2,000 jets that have not been operated for a week or more.

Boeing had advised airlines about the potential problem with older 737 aircraft after four reports of single-engine shutdowns that were caused when engine bleed air valves were stuck open.

“With airplanes being stored or used infrequently due to lower demand during the COVID-19 pandemic, the valve can be more susceptible to corrosion,” Boeing said in a statement.

On July 15, an Alaska Airlines flight from Seattle, Washington to Austin, Texas experienced an engine shutdown. The plane landed safely and the engine was later replaced.

Airlines are complying with the order and are not expecting schedule disruptions. The order only affects the older 737s; the newer Boeing 737 Max has been grounded since March 2019 after two crashes and are not expected to carry passengers again until early 2021.

Source: CNBC and The Wall Street Journal

Investigator Find Employees of a Florida Nuclear Power Plant Falsified Inspection Reports

Three workers at a Florida nuclear power plant have been fired after inspectors determined that the employees failed to inspect a cooling system component and then falsified their inspection results.

The two reactors of the Turkey Point Nuclear Generating Station, located 60 miles south of Fort Lauderdale, came online in the early 1970s and provide power to about one million homes in South Florida. Because of their age, critical systems are regularly dismantled and inspected for wear and other age-related symptoms.

One such inspection was to be performed every three years on a valve in the reactors' backup cooling system. Nuclear Regulatory Commission investigators

became suspicious when the team responsible for the inspection in 2019 failed to check out specialized equipment necessary to perform the task.

The team, it was determined, not only failed to do the inspection but then falsified the records, reporting the same measurements as had been taken in 2015.

While a spokesman for the Florida Power & Light (FPL) said that, “at no time was the safety of the plant or the public compromised,” industry watchdogs disagree.

“If something happens to those pumps, you have all the heat in the reactor with nowhere to go,” said Edwin Lyman, a nuclear power expert with the Union of Concerned Scientists. “And even if you shut it down, you have all the heat there and it has to go somewhere or the reactor can overheat.”

Two maintenance workers and a supervisor were fired by FPL, which is still reviewing the incident.

Source: South Florida Sun Sentinel

Robot with UV Light System Used to Clean Airplanes Between Flights to Combat COVID-19

JetBlue recently announced that the airline has started using robots with ultraviolet light systems as part of the cleaning and sanitizing process on aircraft between flights.

This technology — the Honeywell UV Cabin System — is being tested by the airline as part of a 90-day pilot program. The process is being used at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York and Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport in Florida.

According to a press release issued by Honeywell, “In clinical studies, ultraviolet light has been found to be capable of significantly reducing certain viruses and bacteria when properly applied at prescribed levels. The Honeywell UV Cabin System can traverse an aircraft cabin in less than 10 minutes, and JetBlue will be gauging the system's place in its operation, while continuing other cleaning methods.”

About the size of an aircraft beverage cart, the unit has arms with UV-C light attachments that sweep the cabin.

“Preliminary results from studies performed by Boston University and a consortium of Italian medical and academic professionals report that UV-C light can inactivate the virus at prescribed dosages in the lab,” Honeywell said. Additional studies are underway for other environments.

Source: WSVN.com