

Safety board probes dramatic engine failure of Air Canada jet



Jonathan Bergen's (blue shirt, back to camera) rear window of his vehicle was hit by falling debris when an Air Canada Boeing 777, en route to Tokyo.

OTTAWA-Canadian safety experts have launched a formal investigation into an Air Canada jet's dramatic engine failure that dropped debris across Mississauga.

Calling the incident unusual, officials with the Transportation Safety Board of Canada confirmed Wednesday they will be doing a full investigation into the engine failure, with a written report at the end of their probe.

"It's kind of unusual that we're going to be shedding parts out of this engine. So it attracts our attention right off the bat. It's the latest generation of aircraft and engine," said Don Enns, regional manager for the Transportation Safety Board.

"The Americans are quite interested in it as well. They built and certified the airplane," Enns said Wednesday.

Air Canada Flight 001 had departed Pearson International Airport for Japan Monday when the pilots of the Boeing 777-333 heard a loud bang and temperatures in the number two engine spiked. The pilots dumped fuel over Lake Ontario and returned to Pearson for a safe landing. There were no injuries.

However, the massive GE-90-115B engine had dropped a trail of debris under the plane's flight path. The blackened pieces of metal have been identified as pieces of turbine blades, Enns said.

"We're looking at some kind of failure in the turbine section," Enns said, referring to the rear section of the engine.

It was a rare and dramatic failure for an engine which has a place in the

Guinness Book of Records as the most powerful jet engine in the world.

The same Boeing 777 had suffered engine damage in the past, according to safety board records.

In 2009, the aircraft struck geese while landing in Vancouver, causing damage to parts of the plane, including four fan blades in the number two engine.

On another flight a few months before that, pilots reported vibrations in number two engine. Mechanics later found that "numerous" fan blades were "delaminated" and had to be replaced.

Enns said investigators will be looking at whether the incidents are related and whether it's even the same engine - it might have been swapped out with another one.

"All of that will come out in the history as we continue this investigation," he said.

Enns said the length of the investigation depends in part on how long it takes to get the engine into an overhaul shop so it can be dismantled for inspection.

<http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/politics/article/1202913--safety-board-probes-dramatic-engine-failure-of-air-canada-jet>