

I own a 1975 Lycoming O-320-E2D in a Cessna 172M with 1,992 hours TTAE. My last annual showed the cylinders with 72/80 or better compression all the way around. Oil consumption has been one quart burned every six to eight hours, and the engine starts better than (and runs almost as smooth as) my BMW. The only unscheduled maintenance in my four and a half years and 250 hours of ownership has been an alternator rebuild and some brake work. I am aware of the 2,000-hr oil-pump A.D. and possible upcoming A.D. notes on valves and/or guides. Your opinion, please: Should I rebuild the oil pump and wait a year or two to see what new A.D. requirements might affect the engine, or should I do a top or major overhaul now? I do not want to have an unsafe airplane, but I hate to tear down a perfectly good engine.—R.M., TN

It's a shame to have to stop what you're doing at 2,000 hours TT to comply with A.D. 81-18-08 (on sintered iron oil pump impellers; applicable to many Lycomings), but if the logbooks leave any doubt as to the type of pump gears in your engine, you definitely should stop and comply with the A.D. at this time. As we've said many times before, the sintered iron pumps are a definitely hazard and should be replaced no later than 2,000 hours; we fully agree with the A.D. Unfortunately, there is often no easy way to tell what kind of pump is in the engine. (A call to Lycoming might be in order: 717/323-6181.)

We wouldn't automatically overhaul the engine while it is down for the pump A.D. As a Part 91 operator (and sole owner-operator of the plane), you are within your rights to go beyond TBO, and your engine appears to be a good candidate for TBO-busting. (Of course, if you have an accident and somebody sues you, it won't look good in court when the engine manufacturer's representatives testify that you knowingly disregarded their explicit recommendations regarding overhauls; but that's a risk you'll knowingly have to take.) Even if the FAA goes ahead with its proposed valve A.D. (*LPM*, June '88, p. 24) and requires you to replace your P/N 74541 valves at 2,000 hours, it *still* may be worthwhile to postpone a major. (A lot will depend on what else you find while the jugs are off for the valve job.)

With all the above caveats in mind, we feel a reasonable course of action is to comply with the oil pump A.D. immediately (no later than 2,000 TT) and fly for one to two years, before stopping to top or major the engine.