

Issued in Washington, DC on March 17, 1999, under the authority delegated in 49 CFR part 106.

Alan I. Roberts,

Associate Administrator for Hazardous Materials Safety.

[FR Doc. 99-7040 Filed 3-22-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-60-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

49 CFR Parts 571, 585, 587, and 595

[Docket No. NHTSA 98-4405, Notice 3]

Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; Occupant Crash Protection

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of a technical workshop.

SUMMARY: Because biomechanical performance criteria are essential to the successful design, evaluation, and regulation of vehicle safety systems with air bags, NHTSA is holding a technical workshop to provide an additional opportunity for a continuing dialog with the biomechanics community to insure that appropriate criteria are considered during current rulemaking activities. Attendance is open to both participants (presenters and discussants) and observers.

DATES: *Public Workshop:* We will hold the public workshop on April 20 and 21, 1999, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. Those wishing to participate in the workshop should contact Dr. Rolf Eppinger, at the address, telephone, or e-mail listed below, by April 8, 1999. If you plan to present a statement during the meeting, please provide a copy of your statement to Dr. Eppinger by April 13, 1999.

Written Comments: Written comments may be made to the agency and must be received by April 30, 1999.

ADDRESSES: *Public Workshop:* We will hold the public workshop in room 2230 of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, DC 20590.

Written Comments: If you wish to submit written comments on the issues related to or discussed at this workshop, they should refer to Docket No. NHTSA 98-4405, Notice 3, and be submitted to: Docket Management, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590 (Docket hours are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

For non-legal issues: Dr. Rolf Eppinger, Office of Human-Centered Research, 400 Seventh Street, SW,

Washington, DC 20590 (telephone 202-366-4720; fax 202-366-5670, reppinger@nhtsa.dot.gov).

For legal issues: Edward Glancy, Office of Chief Counsel, NCC-20, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590 (telephone 202-366-2992; fax 202-366-3820).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Background

On September 18, 1998, we published in the **Federal Register** (63 FR 49958) a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to upgrade Standard No. 208, Occupant Crash Protection, to require advanced air bags. The proposal would require that improvements be made in the ability of air bags to cushion and protect occupants of different sizes, both belted or unbelted, and would require air bags to be redesigned to minimize risks of air-bag-induced injuries to infants, children, and other occupants seated in a variety of nonstandard positions. The agency held a public meeting relating to this proposal on November 23 and 24, 1998.

Essential parts of our proposal are biomechanical performance criteria (injury criteria and associated performance limits) that evaluate and limit the impact to test dummies to appropriately safe levels under specified test conditions. In the proposal, we referred to and provided a supplemental report titled "Development of Improved Injury Criteria for the Assessment of Advanced Automotive Restraint Systems" that detailed the sources and processes we used to arrive at our proposed biomechanical performance criteria. Comments on these proposed performance criteria ranged from agreement with NHTSA's proposals to proposals of alternative criteria and limits.

In light of the diversity of opinions expressed and in order to ensure that we consider appropriate criteria in developing the final rule, we will hold a technical workshop at which interested persons can present, and workshop participants can discuss, the technical bases and merits of the performance criteria they believe are the most appropriate for the agency to adopt.

B. Public Workshop

1. Purposes and Issues

- The purposes of the workshop are to: gather pertinent information and/or comment concerning the technical bases and rationale for the biomechanical performance criteria that should be considered by the agency for use in

evaluating and regulating the performance of advanced air bag safety systems.

- Obtain specific technical comments, discussion, and/or constructive input related to the biomechanical performance criteria and their limits as proposed by the agency in its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) published in the **Federal Register** (63 FR 49958) on September 18, 1998, or those criteria and limits as recommended by commenters in response to the notice.

- Provide an opportunity for interested persons to present other data and criteria thought biomechanically relevant and appropriate for application in the automotive crash environment but not cited by either NHTSA or in the comments on the September 1998 NPRM.

Specific issues to be considered and discussed during the workshop include:

- What are the appropriate criteria and their biomechanical bases that can be used for the various body regions at risk in a crash? (Specific body regions to be considered include as a minimum the skull/brain, the neck, and the thorax.)
- What statistical techniques are appropriate to extract meaningful relationships between measurable engineering parameters and the probability of a certain injury outcome?
- What factors should be considered in the evaluation of alternative criteria?
- What scaling techniques are appropriate to extend a criterion's form and limits to validly encompass the wide range of occupant sizes being addressed by NHTSA? (From 12-month-old infant, to a 50th percentile adult male.)

2. Availability of Relevant Documents

The September 18, 1998, proposal for advanced air bags, the biomechanical support paper, and comments on the proposal have been placed in the docket. To obtain them, you may either visit the docket in Washington, DC, or access them via the Web.

The docket is located in Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC. Docket hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Docket Management Web site is at "<http://dms.dot.gov/>". You should search for Docket number 4405.

The September 18 proposal (typewritten version) and the two technical papers are also available on NHTSA's Web site. The address for this site is "<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/>". You should select "Advanced Air Bags" under "Popular Information."

3. Procedural Matters

The purpose of this workshop is to provide NHTSA an opportunity for further dialog with the biomechanics community and interested parties to gather information, data, and opinions on proposals by and to the agency regarding biomechanical performance criteria needed to support the agency's recently proposed rulemaking initiatives. To maximize the output of the workshop within the limited time available, the first topic to be addressed will concern the appropriateness of the various statistical techniques used to analyze the available biomechanical data. Subsequent topics, in the order of their presentation, will be discussions of proposals for criteria for the skull/brain, neck, and the torso. The order of events in each topic area will be: A short presentation of the NHTSA proposal presented in the NPRM. Then, presentations by persons and organizations on the proposals and/or comments they made to the docket. This will be followed by presentations of any new or previously uncited data by interested persons, an open discussion by workshop participants of the technical merits of the previous presentations, and a summary statement by the workshop. To insure that the agency is fully cognizant of their issues and positions taken at this workshop, a transcript of the workshop will be made. Persons and organizations are also encouraged to submit written comments on the issues related to or discussed at this workshop. They should be submitted (preferably two copies) to Docket Management, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, Washington, DC 20590. Submissions must refer to Docket NHTSA 98-4405, Notice 3.

4. Workshop Participation

This workshop is a public workshop, and attendance is open to the public. You may attend as a participant (a presenter or a discussant) or an observer.

C. Written Comments

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on this notice. Two copies should be submitted to Docket Management at the address given at the beginning of this document.

In addition, for those comments of four or more pages in length, it is requested but not required that 10 additional copies, as well as one copy on computer disc, be sent to: Dr. Rolf Eppinger, Office of Human-Centered Research, National Highway Traffic

Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. This would aid the agency in expediting its review of all the comments. The copy on computer disc may be in any format although the agency would prefer that it be in WordPerfect 8.

All comments must not exceed 15 pages in length (49 CFR 553.21). Necessary attachments may be appended to these submissions without regard to the 15-page limit. This limitation is intended to encourage commenters to detail their primary arguments in a concise fashion.

If a commenter wishes to submit certain information under a claim of confidentiality, three copies of the complete submission, including purportedly confidential business information, should be submitted to the Chief Counsel, NHTSA, at the street address given above, and two copies from which the purportedly confidential information has been deleted should be submitted to Docket Management. A request for confidentiality should be accompanied by a cover letter setting forth the information specified in the agency's confidential business information regulation. 49 CFR part 512.

List of Subjects in 49 CFR Part 571

Imports, Motor Vehicle Safety, Motor Vehicles.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 322, 30111, 30115, 30117, and 30166; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50.

Issued on: March 17, 1999.

L. Robert Shelton,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

[FR Doc. 99-7073 Filed 3-22-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-59-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Bureau of Transportation Statistics

49 CFR Part 1420

[Docket No. BTS-98-4659]

RIN 2139-AA05

Revision to Reporting Requirements for Motor Carriers of Property and Household Goods

AGENCY: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, DOT.

ACTION: Supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) collects data from motor carriers of property on annual report Form M and quarterly report Form QFR. BTS proposes to adopt measures

concerning what data from those forms are made publicly available. Summary information, where information cannot be readily matched to an individual carrier, would always be made available. However, the proposed rules would restrict access to individual carrier data for some of the operating statistics, revenue equipment, and employment data items. Access to these data items would be limited to the Department of Transportation (DOT) and to such persons and in such circumstances as DOT determines to be in the public interest or consistent with the Department's regulatory functions and responsibilities.

DATES: Comments must be submitted by April 22, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Please direct comments to the Docket Clerk, Docket No. BTS-98-4659, Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Room PL-401, Washington, DC 20590, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Comments should identify the regulatory docket number and be submitted in duplicate to the address listed above. Commenters wishing the Department to acknowledge receipt of their comments must submit with those comments a self-addressed stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: Comments on Docket BTS-98-4659. The Docket Clerk will date stamp the postcard and mail it back to the commenter.

If you wish to file comments using the Internet, you may use the U.S. DOT Dockets Management System website at <http://dms.dot.gov>. Please follow the instructions online for more information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

David Mednick, K-2, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590; (202) 366-8871; fax: (202) 366-3640; e-mail: david.mednick@bts.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Electronic Access

You can examine all comments that were submitted to the Rules Docket concerning this rulemaking at: Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Room PL-401, Washington, DC 20590, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Internet users can access the comments at the address: <http://dms.dot.gov>. Search for Docket Number 4659. Please follow the instructions online for more information and help.

You can download an electronic copy of this document using a modem and