

§ 576.3 Application.

This part applies to all manufacturers of motor vehicles, with respect to all records generated or acquired on or after August 16, 1969, and to all manufacturers of motor vehicle equipment, with respect to all records in their possession, generated or acquired on or after August 9, 2002.

[67 FR 45873, July 10, 2002]

§ 576.4 Definitions.

All terms in this part that are defined in 49 U.S.C. 30102 and part 579 of this chapter are used as defined therein.

[67 FR 45873, July 10, 2002]

§ 576.5 Basic requirements.

(a) Each manufacturer of motor vehicles, child restraint systems, and tires shall retain, as specified in §576.7 of this part, all records described in §576.6 of this part for a period of five calendar years from the date on which they were generated or acquired by the manufacturer.

(b) Each manufacturer of motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment shall retain, as specified in §576.7 of this part, all the underlying records on which the information reported under part 579 of this chapter is based, for a period of five calendar years from the date on which they were generated or acquired by the manufacturer, except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section.

(c) Manufacturers need not retain copies of documents transmitted to NHTSA pursuant to parts 573, 577, and 579 of this chapter.

[67 FR 45873, July 10, 2002]

§ 576.6 Records.

Records to be maintained by manufacturers under this part include all documentary materials, films, tapes, and other information-storing media that contain information concerning malfunctions that may be related to motor vehicle safety. Such records include, but are not limited to, reports and other documents, including material generated or communicated by computer, telefax or other electronic means, that are related to work per-

formed under warranties; and any lists, compilations, analyses, or discussions of such malfunctions contained in internal or external correspondence of the manufacturer, including communications transmitted electronically.

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§ 576.7 Retention.

Duplicate copies need not be retained. Information may be reproduced or transferred from one storage medium to another (e.g., from paper files to microfilm) as long as no information is lost in the reproduction or transfer, and when so reproduced or transferred the original form may be treated as a duplicate.

§ 576.8 Malfunctions covered.

For purposes of this part, "malfunctions that may be related to motor vehicle safety" shall include, with respect to a motor vehicle or item of motor vehicle equipment, any failure or malfunction beyond normal deterioration in use, or any failure of performance, or any flaw or unintended deviation from design specifications, that could in any reasonably foreseeable manner be a causative factor in, or aggravate, an accident or an injury to a person.

PART 577—DEFECT AND NONCOMPLIANCE NOTIFICATION

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AUTHORITY: 49 U.S.C. 30102-103, 30112, 30115, 30117-121, 30166-167; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 49 CFR 501.8.

SOURCE: 41 FR 56816, Dec. 30, 1976, unless otherwise noted.

§ 577.1

49 CFR Ch. V (10–1–02 Edition)

§ 577.1 Scope.

This part sets forth requirements for notification to owners of motor vehicles and replacement equipment about the possibility of a defect which relates to motor vehicle safety or a non-compliance with a Federal motor vehicle safety standard.

§ 577.2 Purpose.

The purpose of this part is to ensure that notifications of defects or non-compliances adequately inform and effectively motivate owners of potentially defective or noncomplying motor vehicles or items of replacement equipment to have such vehicles or equipment inspected and, where necessary, remedied as quickly as possible.

§ 577.3 Application.

This part applies to manufacturers of complete motor vehicles, incomplete motor vehicles, and replacement equipment. In the case of vehicles manufactured in two or more stages, compliance by either the manufacturer of the incomplete vehicle, any subsequent manufacturer, or the manufacturer of affected replacement equipment, shall be considered compliance by each of those manufacturers.

§ 577.4 Definitions.

For the purposes of this part:

Act means 49 U.S.C. Chapter 30101–30169.

Administrator means the Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration or his delegate.

First purchaser means the first purchaser in good faith for a purpose other than resale.

Leased motor vehicle means any motor vehicle that is leased to a person for a term of at least four months by a lessor who has leased five or more vehicles in the twelve months preceding the date of notification by the vehicle manufacturer of the existence of a safety-related defect or noncompliance with a Federal motor vehicle safety standard in the motor vehicle.

Lessee means a person who is the lessee of a leased motor vehicle as defined in this section.

Lessor means a person or entity that is the owner, as reflected on the vehi-

cle's title, of any five or more leased vehicles (as defined in this section), as of the date of notification by the manufacturer of the existence of a safety-related defect or noncompliance with a Federal motor vehicle safety standard in one or more of the leased motor vehicles.

Owners includes purchaser.

[41 FR 56816, Dec. 30, 1976, as amended at 60 FR 17270, Apr. 5, 1995]

§ 577.5 Notification pursuant to a manufacturer's decision.

(a) When a manufacturer of motor vehicles or replacement equipment determines that any motor vehicle or item of replacement equipment produced by him contains a defect which relates to motor vehicle safety, or fails to conform to an applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standard, he shall provide notification in accordance with paragraph (a) of § 577.7, unless the manufacturer is exempted by the Administrator (pursuant to section 157 of the Act) from giving such notification. The notification shall contain the information specified in this section. The information required by paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section shall be presented in the form and order specified. The information required by paragraphs (d) through (h) of this section may be presented in any order. The manufacturer shall mark the outside of each envelope in which it sends an owner notification letter with a notation that includes the words "SAFETY," "RECALL," and "NOTICE," all in capital letters and in type that is larger than that used in the address section, and is also distinguishable from the other type in a manner other than size. Except where the format of the envelope has been previously approved by NHTSA, each manufacturer must submit the envelope format it intends to use to NHTSA at least 5 Federal government business days before mailing to owners, in the same manner as is required by § 573.5(c)(9) for owner notification letters. Notification sent to an owner whose address is in either the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or the Canal Zone shall be written in both English and Spanish.

(b) An opening statement: "This notice is sent to you in accordance with

the requirements of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act.”

(c) Whichever of the following statements is appropriate:

(1) “(Manufacturer’s name or division) has decided that a defect which relates to motor vehicle safety exists in (identified motor vehicles, in the case of notification sent by a motor vehicle manufacturer; identified replacement equipment, in the case of notification sent by a replacement equipment manufacturer);” or

(2) “(Manufacturer’s name or division) has decided that (identified motor vehicles, in the case of notification sent by a motor vehicle manufacturer; identified replacement equipment, in the case of notification sent by a replacement equipment manufacturer) fail to conform to Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. (number and title of standard).”

(d) When the manufacturer determines that the defect or noncompliance may not exist in each such vehicle or item of replacement equipment, he may include an additional statement to that effect.

(e) A clear description of the defect or noncompliance, which shall include—

(1) An identification of the vehicle system or particular item(s) of motor vehicle equipment affected.

(2) A description of the malfunction that may occur as a result of the defect or noncompliance. The description of a noncompliance with an applicable standard shall include, in general terms, the difference between the performance of the noncomplying vehicle or item of replacement equipment and the performance specified by the standard;

(3) A statement of any operating or other conditions that may cause the malfunction to occur; and

(4) A statement of the precautions, if any, that the owners should take to reduce the chance that the malfunction will occur before the defect or noncompliance is remedied.

(f) An evaluation of the risk to motor vehicle safety reasonably related to the defect or noncompliance.

(1) When vehicle crash is a potential occurrence, the evaluation shall in-

clude whichever of the following is appropriate:

(i) A statement that the defect or noncompliance can cause vehicle crash without prior warning; or

(ii) A description of whatever prior warning may occur, and a statement that if this warning is not heeded, vehicle crash can occur.

(2) When vehicle crash is not the potential occurrence, the evaluation must include a statement indicating the general type of injury to occupants of the vehicle, or to persons outside the vehicle, that can result from the defect or noncompliance, and a description of whatever prior warning may occur.

(g) A statement of measures to be taken to remedy the defect or noncompliance, in accordance with paragraph (g)(1) or (g)(2) of this section, whichever is appropriate.

(1) When the manufacturer is required by the Act to remedy the defect or noncompliance without charge, or when he will voluntarily so remedy in full conformity with the Act, he shall include—

(i) A statement that he will cause such defect or noncompliance to be remedied without charge, and whether such remedy will be by repair, replacement, or (except in the case of replacement equipment) refund, less depreciation, of the purchase price.

(ii) The earliest date on which the defect or noncompliance will be remedied without charge. In the case of remedy by repair, this date shall be the earliest date on which the manufacturer reasonably expects that dealers or other service facilities will receive necessary parts and instructions. The manufacturer shall specify the last date, if any, on which he will remedy tires without charge.

(iii) In the case of remedy by repair through the manufacturer’s dealers or other service facilities:

(A) A general description of the work involved in repairing the defect or noncompliance; and

(B) The manufacturer’s estimate of the time reasonably necessary to perform the labor required to correct the defect or noncompliance.

(iv) In the case of remedy by repair through service facilities other than

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those of the manufacturer or its dealers:

(A) The name and part number of each part must be added, replaced, or modified;

(B) A description of any modifications that must be made to existing parts, which shall also be identified by name and part number;

(C) Information as to where needed parts will be available;

(D) A detailed description (including appropriate illustrations) of each step required to correct the defect or non-compliance;

(E) The manufacturer's estimate of the time reasonably necessary to perform the labor required to correct the defect or noncompliance; and

(F) The manufacturer's recommendations of service facilities where the owner should have the repairs performed.

(v) In the case of remedy by replacement, a description of the motor vehicle or item of replacement equipment that the manufacturer will provide as a replacement for the defective or non-complying vehicle or equipment.

(vi) In the case of remedy by refund of purchase price, the method or basis for the manufacturer's assessment of depreciation.

(vii) A statement informing the owner that he or she may submit a complaint to the Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590 or call the toll free Auto Safety Hotline at 800-424-9393 (Washington, DC area residents may call 202-366-0123), if the owner believes that:

(A) The manufacturer, distributor, or dealer has failed or is unable to remedy the defect or noncompliance without charge.

(B) The manufacturer has failed or is unable to remedy the defect or non-compliance without charge—

(1) (In the case of motor vehicles or items of replacement equipment, other than tires) within a reasonable time, which is not longer than 60 days in the case of repair after the owner's first tender to obtain repair following the earliest repair date specified in the notification, unless the period is extended by Administrator.

(2) (In the case of tires) after the date specified in the notification on which replacement tires will be available.

(2) When the manufacturer is not required to remedy the defect or non-compliance without charge and he will not voluntarily so remedy, the statement shall include—

(i) A statement that the manufacturer is not required by the Act to remedy without charge.

(ii) A statement of the extent to which the manufacturer will voluntarily remedy, including the method of remedy and any limitations and conditions imposed by the manufacturer on such remedy.

(iii) The manufacturer's opinion whether the defect or noncompliance can be remedied by repair. If the manufacturer believes that repair is possible, the statement shall include the information specified in paragraph (g)(1)(iv) of this section, except that;

(A) The statement required by paragraph (g)(1)(iv)(A) of this section shall also indicate the suggested list price of each part.

(B) The statement required by paragraph (g)(1)(iv)(C) of this section shall also indicate the manufacturer's estimate of the date on which the parts will be generally available.

(h) Any lessor who receives a notification of a determination of a safety-related defect or noncompliance pertaining to any leased motor vehicle shall send a copy of such notice to the lessee as prescribed by §577.7(a)(2)(iv). This requirement applies to both initial and follow-up notifications, but does not apply where the manufacturer has notified a lessor's lessees directly.

(Authority: Secs. 108, 112, and 119, Pub. L. 89-563; 80 Stat. 718; secs. 102, 103, and 104, Pub. L. 93-492, 88 Stat. 1470 (15 U.S.C. 1397, 1401, 1408, and 1411-1420); delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50)

[41 FR 56816, Dec. 30, 1976, as amended at 46 FR 6971, Jan. 22, 1981; 46 FR 28657, May 28, 1981; 60 FR 17270, Apr. 5, 1995; 61 FR 279, Jan. 4, 1996]

§577.6 Notification pursuant to Administrator's decision.

(a) Agency-ordered notification. When a manufacturer is ordered pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 30118(b) to provide notification of a defect or noncompliance, he

shall provide such notification in accordance with §§577.5 and 577.7, except that the statement required by paragraph (c) of §577.5 shall indicate that the decision has been made by the Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

(b) *Provisional notification.* When a manufacturer does not provide notification as required by paragraph (a) of this section, and an action concerning the Administrator's order to provide such notification has been filed in a United States District Court, the manufacturer shall, upon the Administrator's further order, provide in accordance with paragraph (b) of §577.7 a provisional notification containing the information specified in this paragraph, in the order and, where specified, the form of paragraphs (b)(1) through (b)(12) of this section.

(1) An opening statement: "This notice is sent to you in accordance with the requirements of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act."

(2) Whichever of the following statements is appropriate:

(i) "The Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has decided that a defect which relates to motor vehicle safety exists in (identified motor vehicles, in the case of notification sent by a manufacturer of motor vehicles; identified replacement equipment, in the case of notification sent by a manufacturer of replacement equipment);" or

(ii) "The Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has decided that (identified motor vehicles in the case of notification sent by a motor vehicle manufacturer; identified replacement equipment, in the case of notification sent by a manufacturer of replacement equipment) fail to conform to federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. (number and title of standard)."

(3) When the Administrator decides that the defect or noncompliance may not exist in each such vehicle or item of replacement equipment, the manufacturer may include an additional statement to that effect.

(4) The statement: "(Manufacturer's name or division) is contesting this determination in a proceeding in the Federal courts and has been required to

issue this notice pending the outcome of the court proceeding."

(5) A clear description of the Administrator's stated basis for his decision, as provided in his order, including a brief summary of the evidence and reasoning that the Administrator relied upon in making his decision.

(6) A clear description of the Administrator's stated evaluation as provided in his order of the risk to motor vehicle safety reasonably related to the defect or noncompliance.

(7) Any measures that the Administrator has stated in his order should be taken by the owner to avoid an unreasonable hazard resulting from the defect or noncompliance.

(8) A brief summary of the evidence and reasoning upon which the manufacturer relies in contesting the Administrator's determination.

(9) A statement regarding the availability of remedy and reimbursement in accordance with paragraph (b)(9)(i) or (9)(ii) of this section, whichever is appropriate.

(i) When the purchase date of the vehicle or item of equipment is such that the manufacturer is required by the Act to remedy without charge or to reimburse the owner for reasonable and necessary repair expenses, he shall include—

(A) A statement that the remedy will be provided without charge to the owner if the Court upholds the Administrator's decision;

(B) A statement of the method of remedy. If the manufacturer has not yet determined the method of remedy, he shall indicate that he will select either repair, replacement with an equivalent vehicle or item of replacement equipment, or (except in the case of replacement equipment) refund, less depreciation, of the purchase price; and

(C) A statement that, if the Court upholds the Administrator's decision, he will reimburse the owner for any reasonable and necessary expenses that the owner incurs (not in excess of any amount specified by the Administrator) in repairing the defect or noncompliance following a date, specified by the manufacturer, which shall not be later than the date of the Administrator's order to issue this notification.

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(ii) When the manufacturer is not required either to remedy without charge or to reimburse, he shall include—

(A) A statement that he is not required to remedy or reimburse, or

(B) A statement of the extent to which he will voluntarily remedy or reimburse, including the method of remedy, if then known, and any limitations and conditions on such remedy or reimbursement.

(10) A statement indicating whether, in the manufacturer's opinion, the defect or noncompliance can be remedied by repair. When the manufacturer believes that such remedy is feasible, the statement shall include:

(i) A general description of the work and the manufacturer's estimate of the costs involved in repairing the defect or noncompliance;

(ii) Information on where needed parts and instructions for repairing the defect or noncompliance will be available, including the manufacturer's estimate of the day on which they will be generally available;

(iii) The manufacturer's estimate of the time reasonably necessary to perform the labor required to correct the defect or noncompliance; and

(iv) The manufacturer's recommendations of service facilities where the owner could have the repairs performed, including (in the case of a manufacturer required to reimburse if the Administrator's decision is upheld in the court proceeding) at least one service facility for whose charges the owner will be fully reimbursed if the Administrator's decision is upheld.

(11) A statement that further notice will be mailed by the manufacturer to the owner if the Administrator's decision is upheld in the court proceeding.

(12) An address of the manufacturer where the owner may write to obtain additional information regarding the notification and remedy.

(c) *Post-litigation notification.* When a manufacturer does not provide notification as required in paragraph (a) of this section and the Administrator prevails in an action commenced with respect to such notification, the manufacturer shall, upon the Administrator's further order, provide notification in accordance with paragraph (b) of §577.7 containing the information spec-

ified in paragraph (a) of this section, except that—

(1) The statement required by paragraph (c) of §577.5 shall indicate that the decision has been made by the Administrator and that his decision has been upheld in a proceeding in the Federal courts; and

(2) When a provisional notification was issued regarding the defect or noncompliance and the manufacturer is required under the Act to reimburse—

(i) The manufacturer shall state that he will reimburse the owner for any reasonable and necessary expenses that the owner incurred (not in excess of any amount specified by the Administrator) for repair of the defect or noncompliance of the vehicle or item of equipment on or after the date on which provisional notification was ordered to be issued and on or before a date not sooner than the date on which this notification is received by the owner. The manufacturer shall determine and specify both dates.

(ii) The statement required by paragraph (g)(1)(vii) of §577.5 shall also inform the owner that he may submit a complaint to the Administrator if the owner believes that the manufacturer has failed to reimburse adequately.

(3) If the manufacturer is not required under the Act to reimburse, he shall include—

(i) A statement that he is not required to reimburse, or

(ii) When he will voluntarily reimburse, a statement of the extent to which he will do so, including any limitations and conditions on such reimbursement.

[41 FR 56816, Dec. 30, 1976, as amended at 60 FR 17271, Apr. 5, 1995]

§577.7 Time and manner of notification.

(a) The notification required by §577.5 shall—

(1) Be furnished within a reasonable time after the manufacturer first decides that either a defect that relates to motor vehicle safety or a noncompliance exists. The Administrator may order a manufacturer to send the notification to owners on a specific date where the Administrator finds,

after consideration of available information and the views of the manufacturer, that such notification is in the public interest. The factors that the Administrator may consider include, but are not limited to, the severity of the safety risk; the likelihood of occurrence of the defect or noncompliance; whether there is something that an owner can do to reduce either the likelihood of occurrence of the defect or noncompliance or the severity of the consequences; whether there will be a delay in the availability of the remedy from the manufacturer; and the anticipated length of any such delay.

(2) Be accomplished—

(i) In the case of a notification required to be sent by a motor vehicle manufacturer, by first class mail to each person who is registered under State law as the owner of the vehicle and whose name and address are reasonably ascertainable by the manufacturer through State records or other sources available to him. If the owner cannot be reasonably ascertained, the manufacturer shall notify the most recent purchaser known to the manufacturer. The manufacturer shall also provide notification to each lessee of a leased motor vehicle that is covered by an agreement between the manufacturer and a lessor under which the manufacturer is to notify lessees directly of safety-related defects and noncompliances.

(ii) In the case of a notification required to be sent by a replacement equipment manufacturer—

(A) By first class mail to the most recent purchaser known to the manufacturer, and

(B) (Except in the case of a tire) if decided by the Administrator to be required for motor vehicle safety, by public notice in such manner as the Administrator may require after consultation with the manufacturer.

(iii) In the case of a manufacturer required to provide notification concerning any defective or noncomplying tire, by first class or certified mail.

(iv) In the case of a notification to be sent by a lessor to a lessee of a leased motor vehicle, by first-class mail to the most recent lessee known to the lessor. Such notification shall be mailed within ten days of the lessor's

receipt of the notification from the vehicle manufacturer.

(b) The notification required by any paragraph of § 577.6 shall be provided:

(1) Within 60 days after the manufacturer's receipt of the Administrator's order to provide the notification, except that the notification shall be furnished within a shorter or longer period if the Administrator incorporates in his order a finding that such period is in the public interest; and

(2) In the manner and to the recipient specified in paragraph (a) of this section.

[41 FR 56816, Dec. 30, 1976, as amended at 60 FR 17271, Apr. 5, 1995]

§ 577.8 Disclaimers.

(a) A notification sent pursuant to §§ 577.5, 577.6, 577.9 or 577.10 regarding a defect which relates to motor vehicle safety shall not, except as specifically provided in this part, contain any statement or implication that there is no defect, that the defect does not relate to motor vehicle safety, or that the defect is not present in the owner's or lessee's vehicle or item of replacement equipment. This section also applies to any notification sent to a lessor or directly to a lessee by a manufacturer.

(b) A notification sent pursuant to §§ 577.5, 577.6, 577.9 or 577.10 regarding a noncompliance with an applicable motor vehicle safety standard shall not, except as specifically provided in this part, contain any statement or implication that there is not a noncompliance, or that the noncompliance is not present in the owner's or lessee's vehicle or item of replacement equipment. This section also applies to any notification sent to a lessor or directly to a lessee by a manufacturer.

[60 FR 17272, Apr. 5, 1995]

§ 577.9 Conformity to statutory requirements.

A notification that does not conform to the requirements of this part is a violation of the Act.

§ 577.10 Follow-up notification.

(a) If, based on quarterly reports submitted pursuant to § 573.6 of this part

or other available information, the Administrator decides that a notification of a safety-related defect of a non-compliance with a Federal motor vehicle safety standard sent by a manufacturer has not resulted in an adequate number of vehicles or items of equipment being returned for remedy, the Administrator may direct the manufacturer to send a follow-up notification in accordance with this section. The scope, timing, form, and content of such follow-up notification will be established by the Administrator, in consultation with the manufacturer, to maximize the number of owners, purchasers, and lessees who will present their vehicles or items of equipment for remedy.

(b) The Administrator may consider the following factors in deciding whether or not to require a manufacturer to undertake a follow-up notification campaign:

(1) The percentage of covered vehicles or items of equipment that have been presented for the remedy;

(2) The amount of time that has elapsed since the prior notification(s);

(3) The likelihood that a follow-up notification will increase the number of vehicles or items of equipment receiving the remedy;

(4) The seriousness of the safety risk from the defect or noncompliance;

(5) Whether the prior notification(s) undertaken by the manufacturer complied with the requirements of the statute and regulations; and

(6) Such other factors as are consistent with the purpose of the statute.

(c) A manufacturer shall be required to provide a follow-up notification under this section only with respect to vehicles or items of equipment that have not been returned for remedy pursuant to the prior notification(s).

(d) Except where the Administrator determines otherwise, the follow-up notification shall be sent to the same categories of recipients that received the prior notification(s).

(e) A follow-up notification must include:

(1) A statement that identifies it as a follow-up to an earlier communication;

(2) A statement urging the recipient to present the vehicle or item of equipment for remedy; and

(3) Except as determined by the Administrator, the information required to be included in the initial notification.

(f) The manufacturer shall mark the outside of each envelope in which it sends a follow-up notification in a manner which meets the requirements of § 577.5(a) of this part.

(g) Notwithstanding any other provision of this part, the Administrator may authorize the use of other media besides first-class mail for a follow-up notification.

[60 FR 17272, Apr. 5, 1995]

PART 578—CIVIL AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES

Sec.

578.1 Scope.

578.2 Purpose.

578.3 Applicability.

578.4 Definitions.

578.5 Inflationary adjustment of civil penalties.

578.6 Civil penalties for violations of specified provisions of Title 49 of the United States Code.

578.7 Criminal safe harbor provision.

AUTHORITY: Pub. L. 101-410, Pub. L. 104-134, Pub. L. 106-414, 49 U.S.C. 30165, 49 U.S.C. 30170, 30505, 32308, 32309, 32507, 32709, 32710, 32912, and 33115; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50.

SOURCE: 62 FR 5169, Feb. 4, 1997, unless otherwise noted.

§ 578.1 Scope.

This part specifies the civil penalties for violations of statutes administered by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, as adjusted for inflation. This part also sets forth the requirements regarding the reasonable time and the manner of correction for a person seeking safe harbor protection from criminal liability under 49 U.S.C. 30170(a).

[65 FR 81418, Dec. 26, 2000]

§ 578.2 Purpose.

One purpose of this part is to preserve the remedial impact of civil penalties and to foster compliance with the law by specifying the civil penalties for statutory violations, as adjusted for inflation. The other purpose