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any such deficiency within 30 days after receipt of the petition.

(b) At any time during the agency's consideration of a petition submitted under this part, the Administrator may request the petitioner to provide additional supporting information and data and/or provide a demonstration of any of the requested test procedures. The agency will seek to make any such request within 60 days after receipt of the petition. Such demonstration may be at either an agency designated facility or one chosen by the petitioner, provided that, in either case, the facility shall be located in North America. If such a request is not honored to the satisfaction of the agency, the petition will not receive further consideration until the requested information is submitted.

(c) The agency will publish in the FEDERAL REGISTER either a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking proposing adoption of the requested test procedures, possibly with changes and/or additions, or a notice denying the petition. The agency will seek to issue either notice within 120 days after receipt of a complete petition. However, this time period may be extended by any time period during which the agency is awaiting additional information it requests from the petitioner or is awaiting a requested demonstration. The agency contemplates a 30 to 60 day comment period for any Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, and will endeavor to issue a final rule within 60 days thereafter.

PART 553—RULEMAKING PROCEDURES

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AUTHORITY: 49 U.S.C. 322, 1657, 30103, 30122, 30124, 30125, 30127, 30146, 30162, 32303, 32502, 32504, 32505, 32705, 32901, 32902, 33102, 33103, and 33107; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50.

SOURCE: 60 FR 62222, Dec. 5, 1995, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General

§ 553.1 Applicability.

This part prescribes rulemaking procedures that apply to the issuance, amendment, and revocation of rules pursuant to Title 49, Subtitle VI of the United States Code (49 U.S.C. 30101, *et seq.*).

§ 553.3 Definitions.

Administrator means the Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration or a person to whom he has delegated final authority in the matter concerned.

Rule includes any order, regulation, or Federal motor vehicle safety standard issued under Title 49.

Title 49 means 49 U.S.C. 30101, *et seq.*

§ 553.5 Regulatory docket.

(a) Information and data deemed relevant by the Administrator relating to rulemaking actions, including notices of proposed rulemaking; comments received in response to notices; petitions for rulemaking and reconsideration; denials of petitions for rulemaking and

reconsideration; records of additional rulemaking proceedings under § 553.25; and final rules are maintained in the Docket Room, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC 20590.

(b) Any person may examine any docketed material at the Docket Room at any time during regular business hours after the docket is established, except material ordered withheld from the public under applicable provisions of Title 49 and section 552(b) of title 5 of the U.S.C., and may obtain a copy of it upon payment of a fee.

§ 553.7 Records.

Records of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration relating to rulemaking proceedings are available for inspection as provided in section 552(b) of title 5 of the U.S.C. and part 7 of the regulations of the Secretary of Transportation (part 7 of this title).

Subpart B—Procedures for Adoption of Rules

§ 553.11 Initiation of rulemaking.

The Administrator may initiate rulemaking either on his own motion or on petition by any interested person after a determination in accordance with Part 552 of this title that grant of the petition is advisable. The Administrator may, in his discretion, also consider the recommendations of other agencies of the United States.

§ 553.13 Notice of proposed rulemaking.

Unless the Administrator, for good cause, finds that notice is impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest, and incorporates that finding and a brief statement of the reasons for it in the rule, a notice of proposed rulemaking is issued and interested persons are invited to participate in the rulemaking proceedings under applicable provisions of Title 49.

§ 553.15 Contents of notices of proposed rulemaking.

(a) Each notice of proposed rulemaking is published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, unless all persons subject to it are named and are personally served with a copy of it.

(b) Each notice, whether published in the FEDERAL REGISTER or personally served, includes

(1) A statement of the time, place, and nature of the proposed rulemaking proceeding;

(2) A reference to the authority under which it is issued;

(3) A description of the subjects and issues involved or the substance and terms of the proposed rule;

(4) A statement of the time within which written comments must be submitted; and

(5) A statement of how and to what extent interested persons may participate in the proceedings.

§ 553.17 Participation of interested persons.

(a) Any interested person may participate in rulemaking proceeding by submitting comments in writing containing information, views or arguments.

(b) In his discretion, the Administrator may invite any interested person to participate in the rulemaking procedures described in § 553.25.

§ 553.19 Petitions for extension of time to comment.

A petition for extension of the time to submit comments must be received not later than 15 days before expiration of the time stated in the notice. The petitions must be submitted to: Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street SW, Washington, DC, 20590. It is requested, but not required, that 10 copies be submitted. The filing of the petition does not automatically extend the time for petitioner's comments. Such a petition is granted only if the petitioner shows good cause for the extension, and if the extension is consistent with the public interest. If an extension is granted, it is granted to all persons, and it is published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

§ 553.21 Contents of written comments.

All written comments shall be in English. Unless otherwise specified in a

notice requesting comments, comments may not exceed 15 pages in length, but necessary attachments may be appended to the submission without regard to the 15-page limit. Any interested person shall submit as a part of his written comments all material that he considers relevant to any statement of fact made by him. Incorporation by reference should be avoided. However, if incorporation by reference is necessary, the incorporated material shall be identified with respect to document and page. It is requested, but not required, that 10 copies and attachments, if any, be submitted.

§ 553.23 Consideration of comments received.

All timely comments are considered before final action is taken on a rulemaking proposal. Late filed comments may be considered as far as practicable.

§ 553.25 Additional rulemaking proceedings.

The Administrator may initiate any further rulemaking proceedings that he finds necessary or desirable. For example, interested persons may be invited to make oral arguments, to participate in conferences between the Administrator or his representative and interested persons at which minutes of the conference are kept, to appear at informal hearings presided over by officials designated by the Administrator, at which a transcript or minutes are kept, or participate in any other proceeding to assure informed administrative action and to protect the public interest.

§ 553.27 Hearings.

(a) Sections 556 and 557 of title 5, United States Code, do not apply to hearings held under this part. Unless otherwise specified, hearings held under this part are informal, nonadversary, fact-finding proceedings, at which there are no formal pleadings or adverse parties. Any rule issued in a case in which an informal hearing is held is not necessarily based exclusively on the record of the hearing.

(b) The Administrator designates a representative to conduct any hearing held under this part. The Chief Counsel designates a member of his staff to serve as legal officer at the hearing.

§ 553.29 Adoption of final rules.

Final rules are prepared by representatives of the office concerned and the Office of the Chief Counsel. The rule is then submitted to the Administrator for its consideration. If the Administrator adopts the rule, it is published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, unless all persons subject to it are named and are personally served with a copy of it.

§§ 553.31–553.33 [Reserved]

§ 553.35 Petitions for reconsideration.

(a) Any interested person may petition the Administrator for reconsideration of any rule issued under this part. The petition shall be submitted to: Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC, 20590. It is requested, but not required, that 10 copies be submitted. The petition must be received not later than 45 days after publication of the rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER. Petitions filed after that time will be considered as petitions filed under Part 552 of this chapter. The petition must contain a brief statement of the complaint and an explanation as to why compliance with the rule is not practicable, is unreasonable, or is not in the public interest. Unless otherwise specified in the final rule, the statement and explanation together may not exceed 15 pages in length, but necessary attachments may be appended to the submission without regard to the 15-page limit.

(b) If the petitioner requests the consideration of additional facts, he must state the reason they were not presented to the Administrator within the prescribed time.

(c) The Administrator does not consider repetitious petitions.

(d) Unless the Administrator otherwise provides, the filing of a petition under this section does not stay the effectiveness of the rule.

§ 553.37 Proceedings on petitions for reconsideration.

The Administrator may grant or deny, in whole or in part, any petition

for reconsideration without further proceedings. In the event he determines to reconsider any rule, he may issue a final decision on reconsideration without further proceedings, or he may provide such opportunity to submit comment or information and data as he deems appropriate. Whenever the Administrator determines that a petition should be granted or denied, he prepares a notice of the grant or denial of a petition for reconsideration, for issuance to the petitioner, and issues it to the petitioner. The Administrator may consolidate petitions relating to the same rule.

§ 553.39 Effect of petition for reconsideration on time for seeking judicial review.

The filing of a timely petition for reconsideration of any rule issued under this part postpones the expiration of the statutory period in which to seek judicial review of that rule only as to the petitioner, and not as to other interested persons. For the petitioner, the period for seeking judicial review will commence at the time the agency takes final action upon the petition for reconsideration.

[60 FR 63651, Dec. 12, 1995]

APPENDIX A TO PART 553—STATEMENT OF POLICY: ACTION ON PETITIONS FOR RECONSIDERATION

It is the policy of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to issue notice of the action taken on a petition for reconsideration within 90 days after the closing date for receipt of such petitions, unless it is found impracticable to take action within that time. In cases where it is so found and the delay beyond that period is expected to be substantial, notice of that fact, and the date by which it is expected that action will be taken, will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

APPENDIX B TO PART 553—STATEMENT OF POLICY: RULEMAKINGS INVOLVING THE ASSESSMENT OF THE FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENCE OF SAFETY STANDARDS

(a) Based on a comparison of the performance of vehicles or equipment, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) may tentatively determine that a foreign motor vehicle safety standard is better than or at least functionally equivalent to a Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS), either on its own motion or in connection with a petition for rulemaking by any interested party under 49 CFR Part 552. Such determinations will be made in accordance with the process described in the flowchart in Figure 1 of this Appendix.

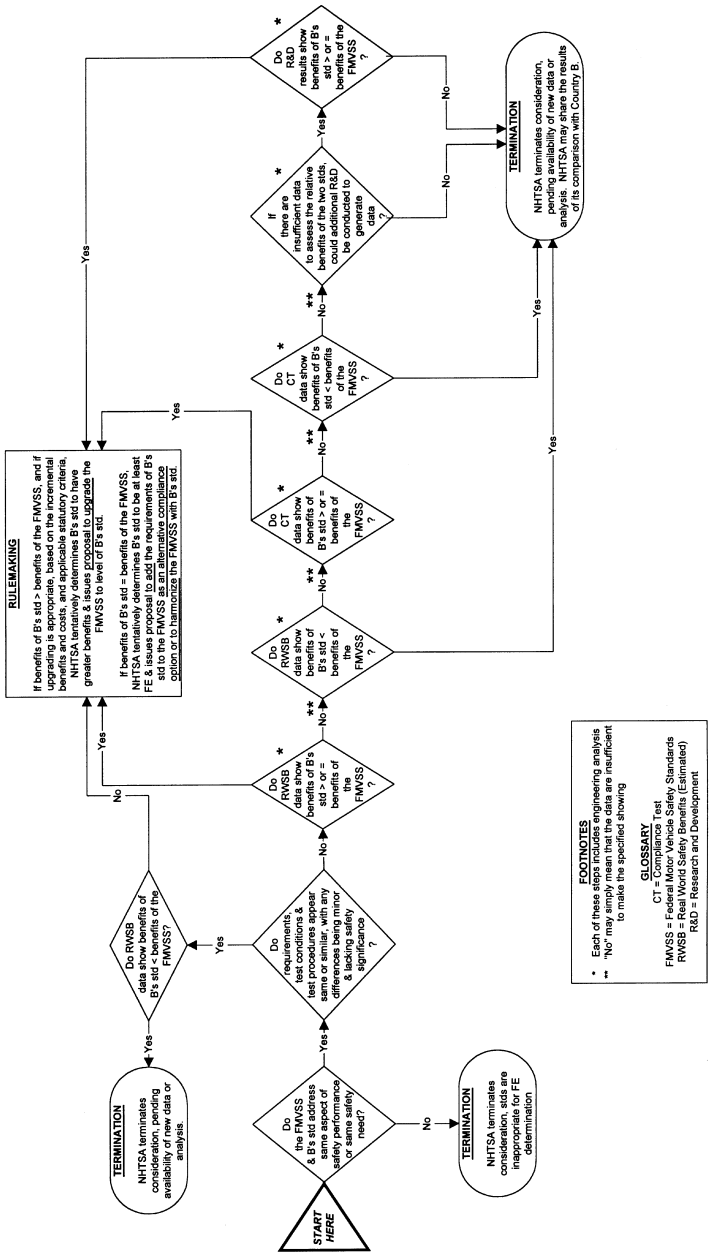
(b) Under the process, if NHTSA decides that there is reason to believe that a foreign standard is better than or at least functionally equivalent to a FMVSS in accordance with the process, it will commence a rulemaking proceeding that may lead to the issuance of a proposal to add the foreign standard as an alternative compliance option to the FMVSS, to harmonize the FMVSS with the foreign standard or to upgrade the FMVSS to the level of the foreign standard, as appropriate. Such a proposal will request comment on the agency's tentative determination regarding relative benefits and functional equivalence as well as the proposed amendment. Final determinations regarding these matters will also be made in accordance with the analytical criteria in the flowchart.

(c) As used in this appendix, the term ''standard'' refers to mandatory requirements and thus has the same meaning given the term ''technical regulation'' in Annex 1 to the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement.

FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENCE ASSESSMENT

PROCESS USED BY NHTSA IN COMPARING ITS VEHICLE SAFETY STANDARDS WITH THOSE OF ANOTHER COUNTRY (B) AND DETERMINING WHETHER RULEMAKING IS APPROPRIATE

FIGURE 1



EXPLANATION OF FLOWCHART

A. Ultimate Goal

The ultimate goal in comparing standards is to assess the real world safety performance of the covered vehicles or equipment. Particularly in the case of crashworthiness standards, the most reliable basis for making that assessment is fatality and injury data directly drawn from actual crashes. Accordingly, NHTSA will make appropriate efforts to ensure the availability of such data regarding crashes in the U.S.

B. Guiding Principles

Best Practices

NHTSA pursues a ''best practices'' policy in comparing U.S. and foreign safety standards, i.e., NHTSA will propose to upgrade its standards if it tentatively concludes that a Country B standard offers greater benefits than the counterpart FMVSS, and if upgrading appears appropriate, considering the incremental costs and benefits and applicable statutory criteria. (For a discussion of another type of rulemaking proposal that may be considered in these circumstances, see the paragraph below on comparisons that indicate that a foreign standard's safety benefits are greater than those of the counterpart FMVSS.)

Conservatism

1. NHTSA places priority on preserving the safety benefits of the FMVSSs.

2. NHTSA can best preserve those benefits by being conservative in reaching any conclusion that a Country B standard is better than or at least functionally equivalent to the counterpart FMVSS. One reason for conservatism is that differences from vehicle model to vehicle model and manufacturer to manufacturer in margins of compliance may confound efforts to assess the relative benefits of two standards. Further, there may be circumstantial differences, such as special environmental conditions, driver demographics, driver behavior, occupant behavior (e.g., level of safety belt use), road conditions, size distribution of vehicle fleet (e.g., proportion of big versus small vehicles and disparity between extremes), that could influence real world safety benefits. These differences may result in a particular standard having a safety record in a foreign country that would not necessarily be repeated in the United States.

Best Available Evidence

1. NHTSA will base its comparison of standards on the best available evidence. If available, estimates of real world safety benefits based on fatality and injury data directly drawn from actual crashes are the best evidence. If such data are not available, then estimates based on other information, such as compliance test data, may be used, although increased caution needs to be exercised in making judgment based on those estimates. If sufficient crash data regarding real world safety benefits are available, and a comparison of those benefits shows that the Country B standard is less beneficial than the counterpart Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS), NHTSA would avoid wasting resources making comparisons on the basis of less probative types of evidence.

2. The types of benefits examined in comparing two standards might differ depending on whether the standards are crash avoidance standards or crashworthiness standards. Translating differences in performance (an input measure) into numbers of crashes or numbers of deaths and injuries (output measures) is more difficult in the case of crash avoidance standards. As a result, while the relative benefits of two crashworthiness standards would typically be assessed in terms of their impacts on deaths and injuries in crashes, the relative merits of two different crash avoidance standards might well be assessed in terms of their impact on vehicle or equipment performance.

Sufficiency of Evidence

1. Many types of data are available for a comparison of two standards. Often there is an abundance of one type of data and little or no data from other sources. If insufficient data are available, and such data either cannot be generated through engineering analysis (e.g., real world safety benefits estimates), or conducting additional research and development is not cost effective, then NHTSA will stop consideration of such data and consider the other available data instead.

2. The essentially horizontal, left-to-right path through the flowchart is intended to illustrate the sources of data that will be considered and provide a rough idea of the priority they will receive. Each step branches independently to the tentative determination of relative benefits and functional equivalency by its ''yes'' path. This may seem to preclude later steps once any ''yes'' path is encountered. In practice, however, all data sources will be considered to the extent that they are available before a final determination regarding these matters is made.

Reciprocity

1. NHTSA will take steps to encourage reciprocity by other countries in the making of functional equivalence determinations.

2. When NHTSA's comparison of standards indicates that one of the FMVSSs has benefits equal to or greater than the counterpart Country B standard, NHTSA may forward the results of that comparison to Country B

and request that consideration be given by Country B to determining that the FMVSS is better than or at least functionally equivalent to the counterpart Country B standard, and to subsequently amending its standard accordingly.

C. Agency Decisions in Which Flowchart Is Used

This flowchart guides agency decisions in connection with a rulemaking proceeding that involves the issue of relative benefits and functional equivalence.

1. *Decision whether to grant a rulemaking petition.* If the agency receives a petition for rulemaking based on a claim that one of Country B's standards is better than or at least functionally equivalent to one of the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSSs), the agency will consider the merits of the petition in accordance with 49 CFR Part 552, Petitions for rulemaking, defect, and noncompliance orders, and with the functional equivalence process set forth in the flowchart. If it appears that there is reason to believe that Country B's standard provides safety benefits are greater than or at least equal to those of the FMVSS, the agency will likely grant the petition and commence a rulemaking proceeding.

The agency emphasizes that its priority with respect to international harmonization is identifying and adopting those foreign safety standards that represent best practices. Accordingly, if resource limitations make it necessary to choose between competing petitions in granting or processing them, the agency would give priority to petitions asking the agency to upgrade one of its standards to the level of a superior foreign standard over petitions simply asking the agency to add a compliance alternative.

2. *Decision whether to issue a notice of proposed rulemaking.* If NHTSA grants the petition, it will proceed, as in any other rulemaking regarding the FMVSSs, to determine whether amending an FMVSS would be appropriate under the applicable statutory criteria in chapter 301 of title 49, U.S.C. Following the process set forth in the flowchart, the agency will use data submitted by the petitioner, supplemented by data from other sources, to compare performance and tentatively determine whether Country B's standard specified in the petition is better than or at least functionally equivalent to the FMVSS specified in the petition.

This comparison could have a variety of possible outcomes:

a. *The comparison may indicate that the foreign standard's safety benefits are less than those of the counterpart FMVSS.* If NHTSA determines that the foreign standard results in fewer safety benefits than the counterpart FMVSS, it will terminate the rulemaking proceeding.

b. *The comparison may indicate that the foreign standard's safety benefits are approximately equal to those of the counterpart FMVSS.* If the agency tentatively determines that the safety benefits of a foreign standard are approximately equal to those of a FMVSS, it will take one of two steps in most instances. One possibility is that it will develop a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) proposing to amend the FMVSS by adding the foreign standard as an alternative to the existing requirements of the FMVSS. The other possibility is that the agency will develop an NPRM proposing to harmonize the FMVSS with the foreign standard. This second approach would enable NHTSA to maintain a single set of requirements and test procedures in its standard, thereby minimizing any drain on its enforcement resources. An additional possibility that might be considered in some instances would be ''qualified functional equivalence.'' Under this third approach, the agency would regard Country B's standard to be functionally equivalent if it is supplemented by a specified requirement in the counterpart FMVSS.

c. *The comparison may indicate that the foreign standard's safety benefits are greater than those of the counterpart FMVSS.* If NHTSA tentatively determines that the foreign standard results in greater safety benefits than the counterpart FMVSS, and if upgrading is appropriate, based on the incremental benefits and costs and applicable statutory criteria, the agency issues an NPRM proposing to upgrade the FMVSS to the level of Country B's std. If upgrading is not appropriate, NHTSA considers issuing an NPRM proposing to add the requirements of Country B's std to the FMVSS as an alternative compliance option. The proposal to add the compliance option would set forth the basis for the agency's conclusion that upgrading the FMVSS is inappropriate.

If NHTSA issues an NPRM, it would request comment on the tentative determination and the proposed amendment.

3. *Decision whether to issue a final rule.* Any final decision to make a determination regarding relative benefits and functional equivalency and to amend the FMVSS will be made in accordance with the process in the flowchart and applicable law and only after careful consideration and analysis of the public comments.

[63 FR 26514, May 13, 1998]

APPENDIX C TO PART 553—STATEMENT OF POLICY: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS/ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UN/ECE) 1998 AGREEMENT ON GLOBAL TECHNICAL REGULATIONS—AGENCY POLICY GOALS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

I. AGENCY POLICY GOALS FOR THE 1998 GLOBAL AGREEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY HARMONIZATION

A. Paramount Policy Goal Under the 1998 Global Agreement

Continuously improve safety and seek high levels of safety, particularly by developing and adopting new global technical regulations reflecting consideration of current and anticipated technology and safety problems.

B. Other Policy Goals

1. Adopt and maintain U.S. standards that fully meet the need in the U.S. for vehicle safety.

2. Harmonize U.S. standards with those of other countries or regions, particularly by raising U.S. standards at least to the level of the best practices in those other safety standards.

3. Enhance regulatory effectiveness through regulatory cooperation with other countries and regions, thereby providing greater safety protection with available government resources.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND THE ESTABLISHING OF GLOBAL TECHNICAL REGULATIONS FOR MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY, THEFT, AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

A. Summary of the Process Under the 1998 Global Agreement for Establishing Global Technical Regulations

1. Proposal Stage

A Contracting Party submits a proposal for either a harmonized or new global technical regulation to the Executive Committee of the 1998 Global Agreement (*i.e.,* the Contracting Parties to the Agreement). If appropriate, the Committee then refers the proposal to a working party of experts to develop the technical elements of the regulation.

2. Recommendation Stage

When a working party of experts recommends a harmonized or new global technical regulation, it sends a report and the recommended regulation to the Executive Committee. The Committee then determines whether the recommendations are adequate and considers the establishment of the recommended regulation.

3. Establishment Stage

If the Executive Committee reaches consensus in favor of that recommended global technical regulation, the global technical regulation is established in the Global Registry.

B. Notice of Annual Work Program of WP.29

Each year, NHTSA will publish a notice concerning the motor vehicle safety, theft, and energy efficiency aspects of the annual program of work for the UN/ECE's World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29). Each notice will include:

1. A calendar of scheduled meetings of WP.29 participants and working parties of experts, and meetings of the Executive Committee; and

2. A list of the global technical regulations that:

a. Have been proposed and referred to a working party of experts, or

b. Have been recommended by a working party of experts.

Periodically, the notice will also include a request for public comments on the subjects for which global technical regulations should be established under the 1998 Global Agreement. The agency will publish a subsequent notice identifying the priorities on which NHTSA will focus in the future under the 1998 Global Agreement.

C. Public Meetings

NHTSA will hold periodic public meetings on its activities under the 1998 Global Agreement. If the extent of recent and anticipated significant developments concerning those activities so warrant, NHTSA will hold a public meeting within the 60-day period before each of the three sessions of WP.29 held annually. At each of these public meetings, NHTSA will:

1. Brief the public on the significant developments that occurred at the session of WP.29, the meetings of the working parties of experts and the meetings of the Executive Committee since the previous public meeting;

2. Based on the availability of provisional agendas, inform the public about the significant issues to be addressed at upcoming session of WP.29 and meetings of the working parties of experts and any votes scheduled at the next session of the Executive Committee on recommended global technical regulations; and

3. Invite public comment and questions concerning those past developments and upcoming issues and votes and the general positions that the U.S. could take regarding those votes, and concerning any other significant developments and upcoming matters relating to pending proposed or recommended global technical regulations.

Appropriate agency officials will participate in the public meetings. These public meetings may be held separately from or in conjunction with the agency's quarterly meetings on its vehicle rulemaking and research and development programs. The agency may hold additional public meetings.

D. Notices Concerning Individual Global Technical Regulations

1. Notice Requesting Written Comment on Proposed Global Technical Regulations

a. *Proposals by the U.S.* (See Figure 1.)

Before submitting a draft U.S. proposal for a global technical regulation to WP.29, NHTSA will publish a notice requesting public comments on the draft proposed global technical regulation. In the case of a draft proposal for a harmonized global technical regulation, the notice will compare that regulation with any existing, comparable U.S. standard, including the relative impacts of the regulation and standard. In the case of a draft proposal for a new global technical regulation, the notice will generally discuss the problem addressed by the proposal, the rationale for the proposed approach for addressing the problem, and the impacts of the proposal. NHTSA will consider the public comments and, as it deems appropriate, revise the proposal and any of its supporting documentation and then submit the proposal to WP.29.

b. *Proposals by a Contracting Party other than the U.S.* (See Figure 2.)

After a proposal by a Contracting Party other than the U.S. has been referred to a working party of experts and has been made available in English by WP.29, NHTSA will make the draft proposal available in the DOT docket (*http://dms.dot.gov/*). The agency will then publish a notice requesting public comment on the draft proposal and will consider the comments in developing a U.S. position on the proposal.

2. Notice Requesting Written Comment on Recommended Global Technical Regulations

If a working party of experts recommends a global technical regulation and sends a report and the recommended regulation to the Executive Committee, NHTSA will make an English language version of the report and the regulation available in the DOT docket (*http://dms.dot.gov/*) after they are made available by WP.29. The agency will publish a notice requesting public comment on the report and regulation. Before participating in a vote of the Executive Committee regarding the establishment of the regulation, the agency will consider the comments and develop a U.S. position on the recommended technical regulation.

3. Notice Requesting Written Comment on Established Global Technical Regulations

If a global technical regulation is established in the Global Registry by a consensus vote of the Executive Committee, and if the U.S. voted for establishment, NHTSA will publish a notice requesting public comment on adopting the regulation as a U.S. standard. Any decision by NHTSA whether to issue a final rule adopting the regulation or to issue a notice terminating consideration of that regulation will be made in accordance with applicable U.S. law and only after careful consideration and analysis of public comments.

E. Availability of Documents

As we obtain English versions of key documents relating to motor vehicle safety, theft or energy conservation that are generated under the 1998 Agreement (e.g., proposals referred to a working party of experts, and reports and recommendations issued by a working party), we will place them in the internet-accessible DOT docket (*http://dms.dot.gov/*). Within the limits of available resources, we will also place the documents on an international activities page that will be included in our Website (*http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/international/index.html*).

Figure 1

Public Participation

US Proposal

for a Harmonized or New Global Technical Regulation

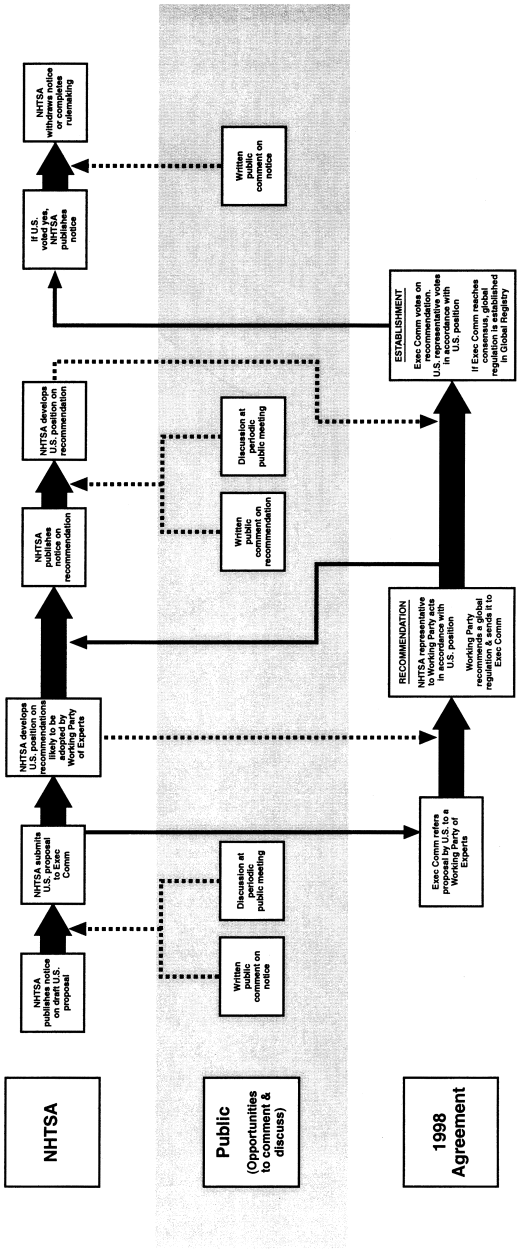
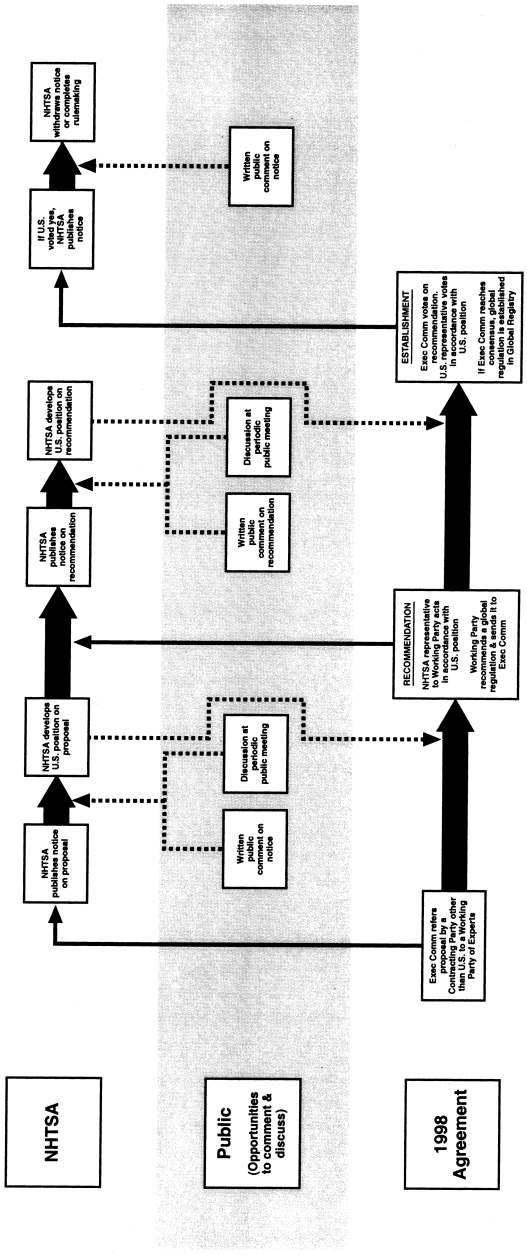


Figure 2

Public Participation

Non-US Proposal

for a Harmonized or New Global Technical Regulation



[65 FR 51245, Aug. 23, 2000]

PART 554—STANDARDS ENFORCEMENT AND DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

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554.2 Purpose.
554.3 Application.
554.4 Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance.
554.5 Office of Defects Investigation.
554.6 Opening an investigation.
554.7 Investigation priorities.
554.8 Monthly reports.
554.9 Availability of files.
554.10 Initial determinations and public meetings.
554.11 Final decisions.

AUTHORITY: 49 U.S.C. 30102–103, 30111–112, 30117–121, 30162, 30165–67; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50.

SOURCE: 45 FR 10797, Feb. 19, 1980, unless otherwise noted.

§ 554.1 Scope.

This part establishes procedures for enforcing Federal motor vehicle safety standards and associated regulations, investigating possible safety-related defects, and making non-compliance and defect determinations.

§ 554.2 Purpose.

The purpose of this part is to inform interested persons of the procedures followed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in order more fairly and effectively to implement 49 U.S.C. Chapter 301.

[60 FR 17267, Apr. 5, 1995]

§ 554.3 Application.

This part applies to actions, investigations, and defect and noncompliance decisions of the National Highway traffic Safety Administration under 49 U.S.C. 30116, 30117, 30118, 30120 and 30165.

[60 FR 17267, Apr. 5, 1995]

§ 554.4 Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance.

The Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance, investigates compliance with Federal motor vehicle safety standards and associated regulations, and to this end may:

(a) Verify that manufacturers certify compliance with all applicable safety standards;

(b) Collect field reports from all sources;

(c) Inspect manufacturers' certification test data and other supporting evidence, including dealer communications;

(d) Inspect vehicles and equipment already in use or new vehicles and equipment at any stage of the manufacturing, distribution and sales chain;

(e) Conduct selective compliance tests; and

(f) Utilize other means necessary to conduct investigations.

§ 554.5 Office of Defects Investigation.

The Office of Defects Investigation conducts investigations to implement the provisions of the Act concerning the identification and correction of safety-related defects in motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment. It elicits from every available source and evaluates on a continuing basis any information suggesting the existence of a safety-related defect.

§ 554.6 Opening an investigation.

(a) A compliance or defect investigation is opened either on the motion of the Administrator or his delegate or on the granting of a petition of an interested party under part 552 of this chapter.

(b) A manufacturer is notified immediately by telephone of any compliance test failure in order to enable the manufacturer to begin his own investigation. Notification is sent by mail at the beginning of any defect or noncompliance investigation.

§ 554.7 Investigation priorities.

(a) Compliance investigation priorities are reviewed annually and are set according to the following criteria:

(1) Prior compliance test data;

(2) Accident data;

(3) Engineering analysis of vehicle and equipment designs;

(4) Consumer complaints; and

(5) Market share.

(b) Defects inputs are reviewed periodically by an appropriate panel of engineers in consultation with the Office of Chief Counsel to determine whether a formal investigation should be opened by the Office of Defects Investigation.