distributed using traditional paper-based methods.

SSA's approval of ESD technologies for use by our customers will mean that the approved technologies provide a sufficient level of security and reliability that they can be an acceptable substitute for traditional paper-based information collection systems as described above, for the purpose of conducting the business of the Agency. Decisions about which ESD technologies are suitable for use with SSA will be made with appropriate input from the SSA components involved in the proposed activity.

Part II

This Policy Interpretation Ruling also addresses the use of electronic and digital signatures. Electronic and digital signatures are an integral factor in many ESD initiatives. Just as technology makes possible the electronic transmission of information for which SSA requires a signature, other technologies provide the means for a document to be ''signed'' without a traditional handwritten signature.

SSA requires a handwritten signature in only a limited number of situations (e.g., applications for benefits). The circumstances where a signature is required is an issue that is beyond the scope of this Ruling. We are expanding the meaning of the term ''signature'' to include electronic and digital methods that serve the purpose of originator identification, authentication, and non-repudiation to the extent that is technologically possible and feasible for SSA's activities.

Policy Interpretation: It is the policy of SSA that information for which SSA requires a signature may be signed using SSA-approved signature methods including handwritten, electronic, or digital methods. Approved signature methods will reasonably ensure, to the extent technologically possible and feasible for SSA's activities, that the signer can be identified and that the signer cannot later repudiate the submission of the information.

Conclusion: The early paragraphs of this Policy Interpretation Ruling listed the four essential security characteristics of paper-based information collection. These two policy interpretations were developed to ensure that the four security characteristics described earlier are maintained in all ESD technologies approved by SSA. Originator authentication and non-repudiation are addressed as aspects of the electronic and digital signature policy. Message integrity and confidentiality, although not specifically described in the policy statement endorsing ESD, are implicitly contained in the limitation statement that all ESD technologies must be approved by SSA.[6]

SSA approval of a particular ESD technology will require assurance that the technology is consistent with all appropriate laws and directives. Since the appropriate technology and levels of security will vary based upon the sensitivity of the business application, SSA's selection of the appropriate technology or technologies for a given usage will be based upon consideration of the service impacts on our customers, a risk analysis including fraud detection, prevention, and prosecution concerns, and an analysis of the costs and benefits related to the technology.

In summation, it is SSA policy that all information received and distributed via Agency-approved ESD technologies is the functional equivalent of information received and distributed using traditional paper-based methods. It is also the policy of SSA that information for which a signature is required, can be signed using electronic or digital technologies approved by SSA, provided that the electronic or digital signature reasonably ensures that the signer can be identified and that the signer cannot later repudiate the submission of the information.

These two policy interpretations are being issued to facilitate the Agency's attempts to better serve our customers through the use of ESD technologies. It is not intended that our customers always must conduct business with SSA electronically. Rather, we are providing our customers with an optional way of doing business with us while ensuring that the information provided to, or distributed by, SSA through electronic methods is as secure and reliable as it must be for the purpose for which it is used.

Effective Date: This Policy Interpretation Ruling is effective upon publication in the Federal Register.

[FR Doc. 96–33034 Filed 12–27–96; 8:45 am]

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[6] For a detailed description of the security features of electronic information transfers in general and digital signatures in particular see generally, M. Baum, Federal Certification Authority Liability and Policy (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, NIST–GCR–94–654 (June 1994)).

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. 96–101; Notice No. 1]

Reports, Forms, and Record keeping Requirements

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

ACTION: Request for public comment on proposed collections of information.

SUMMARY: This notice solicits public comments that requires each tire manufacturer to collect and maintain records of the names and addresses of the first purchasers of new tires.

Before a Federal agency can collect certain information from the public, it must receive approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Under new procedures established by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, before seeking OMB approval, Federal agencies must solicit public comment on proposed collections of information, including extensions and reinstatements of previously approved collections.

This document describes the collection of data used by a tire manufacturer, when it determines that some of its tires either fail to comply with an applicable safety standard or contain a safety-related defect, for which NHTSA intends to seek OMB approval.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before February 28, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Comments must refer to the docket and notice numbers cited at the beginning of this notice and be submitted to Docket Section, Room 5109, NHTSA, 400 Seventh St. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Please identify the proposed collection of information for which a comment is provided, by referencing its OMB Clearance Number. It is requested, but not required, that 1 original plus 2 copies of the comments be provided. The Docket Section is open on weekdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Complete copies of each NHTSA request for collection of information approval may be obtained at no charge from Mr. Ed Kosek, NHTSA Information Collection Clearance Officer, NHTSA, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Room 6123, Washington, D.C. 20590. Mr. Kosek's telephone number is (202) 366-2589. Please identify the relevant collection of information by referring to its OMB Clearance Number.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, before an agency submits a proposed

collection of information to OMB for approval, it must publish a document in the Federal Register providing a 60-day comment period and otherwise consult with members of the public and affected agencies concerning each proposed collection of information. The OMB has promulgated regulations describing what must be included in such a document. Under OMB's regulations (at 5 CFR 1320.8(d)), an agency must ask for public comment on the following:

(i) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;

(ii) The accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(iii) How to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(iv) How to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses. In compliance with these requirements, NHTSA asks public comment on the following proposed collections of information:

49 CFR Part 574, Tire Identification and Record

Type of Request—Reinstatement, with change, of a previously approved collection for which approval has expired.

OMB Clearance Number—2127–0050.

Form Number—This collection of information uses no standard form.

Requested Expiration Date of Approval—Three years from the approval date.

Summary of the Collection of Information—NHTSA requires each tire manufacturer to collect and maintain records of the names and addresses of the first purchasers of new tires. To carry out this mandate, 49 CFR Part 574 requires tire dealers and distributors to record the names and addresses of retail purchasers of new tires and the identification number(s) of the tire sold.

Description of the need for the information and proposed use of the information—The information is used by a tire manufacturer, when it determines that some of its tires either fail to comply with an applicable safety standard or contain a safety-related defect. With the information on the registration form, the tire manufacturer can notify the first purchaser of the tire and provide the purchaser with any necessary information or instructions.

Description of the Likely Respondents (Including Estimated Number, and Proposed Frequency of Response to the Collection of Information)—Estimated number is 3,750,000; Frequency of response—occurs each time a tire is sold.

Estimate of the Total Annual Reporting and Record keeping Burden Resulting from the Collection of Information—747,500 hours.

NHTSA estimates that small businesses will need to spend the same 45 seconds per tire sale to register the tires as the larger businesses. It is not possible to reduce this burden further because Congress mandated that the same forms and the same procedures used to register each manufacturer's tires (49 U.S.C. 30117(b)). However, since these small businesses make fewer sales than larger dealers, they will spend less time on tire registrations. The amount of time per sale spent to register tires does not impose an undue burden on the small businesses involved.

Authority: 44 U.S.C. 3506(c); delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50.

Dated: December 13, 1996.

L. Robert Shelton,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

[FR Doc. 96–33119 Filed 12-27–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–59–P

[Docket No. 96–109; Notice 1]

Reports, Forms, and Recordkeeping Requirements

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

ACTION: Request for public comment on proposed collections of information.

SUMMARY: Before a Federal agency can collect certain information from the public, it must receive approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Under new procedures established by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, before seeking OMB approval, Federal agencies must solicit public comment on proposed collections of information, including extensions and reinstatements of previously approved collections.

This document describes a collection of information for which NHTSA intends to seek OMB approval.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before February 28, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Comments must refer to the docket and notice numbers cited at the beginning of this notice and be submitted to Docket Section, Room 5109, NHTSA, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. Please identify the proposed collection of information for which a comment is provided, by referencing its OMB Clearance Number. It is requested, but not required, that 1 original plus 2 copies of the comments be provided. The Docket Section is open on weekdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Complete copies of each request for collection of information may be obtained at no charge from Mr. Ed Kosek, NHTSA Information Collection Clearance Officer, NHTSA, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Room 6123, Washington, DC 20590. Mr. Kosek's telephone number is (202) 366-2589. Please identify the relevant collection of information by referring to its OMB Clearance Number.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, before an agency submits a proposed collection of information to OMB for approval, it must publish a document in the Federal Register providing a 60-day comment period and otherwise consult with members of the public and affected agencies concerning each proposed collection of information. The OMB has promulgated regulations describing what must be included in such a document. Under OMB's regulations (at 5 CFR 1320.8(d)), an agency must ask for public comment on the following:

(i) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;

(ii) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(iii) how to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(iv) how to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

In compliance with these requirements, NHTSA asks public comment on the following proposed collection of information:

Insurer Reporting Requirement for 49 CFR Part 544

Type of Request—Reinstatement of clearance.

OMB Clearance Number—2127-0547.