

may need a vehicle with a high roof to afford sufficient visibility and comfort. Particularly short statured persons may need to avoid purchasing vehicles whose design places them in close proximity to the driver's air bag.

Vehicle buyers should take care to be sure that the vehicle they choose is suitable for their needs, including having belts that fit. If the original belts in a vehicle do not fit, it may be possible to obtain longer belts or belt extenders from the vehicle manufacturer. Vehicles with optional longer belts are available as listed in Table 1. Although dealers may not always be aware that longer optional belts or belt extenders are available, vehicle purchasers can and should insist that dealers check with the manufacturer. If available, the purchaser should make their inclusion in the vehicle a condition of the sale.

In those instances in which longer belts or belt extenders are needed and are not available from the vehicle manufacturer, there are means available for modifying the vehicle to accommodate the physical needs of a particular buyer. One option is to purchase belt extenders from an aftermarket supplier or to have belt extenders made. Also, some businesses that modify vehicles to accommodate people with disabilities will modify seat belts.

Another alternative is to have more extensive modifications made on the vehicle itself.⁵ Seat positioning can also influence the seat belt fit. For vehicles with at least one end of the belt anchored to the vehicle and not to the seat, an additional 51 mm (2 in.) to 76 mm (3 in.) in belt length is gained for every 25 mm (inch) of rearward seat movement. If a seat position is found that allows the seat belt to fit, but causes the pedals to be out of reach, adjustable pedals may be available as optional equipment. Alternatively, pedal extenders can be obtained.

The agency believes that additional regulatory requirements are not needed to enable larger size persons to find a vehicle that will accommodate their needs and allow them to buckle up. Publication of information on the availability of longer belts as standard equipment⁶ and longer belts or belt extenders as options, should allow

⁵ Vehicles are often modified for people with disabilities. NHTSA is not suggesting that large individuals are disabled. However, modifiers are experienced at fitting vehicles to the unique physical characteristics of certain users. The process is described in *Adapting Motor Vehicles for People with Disabilities*, DOT HS 809 014, and also available at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/adaptive/brochure/index.html>.

⁶ NHTSA currently provide information about the availability of seat belt extenders on our Web site at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/testing/ncap/>.

larger persons to choose models from vehicle manufacturers who are responsive to their needs. Finally, if an individual cannot find a vehicle fitting their needs with a belt that fits, or an available OEM belt extender, a vehicle modifier may be able to fashion a suitable belt extender, produce and install a longer belt, or move the original seat to provide additional belt length.

IV. Conclusion

In accordance with 49 CFR part 552, this completes the agency's review of the petitions for rulemaking. In view of the considerations discussed above, the agency has concluded that there is no reasonable possibility that the amendments requested by the petitioners would be issued at the conclusion of the rulemaking proceeding. Accordingly, rulemaking on the petition from Ms. Fisher is terminated, and the petition for rulemaking submitted by Mr. Levy is denied.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 30103, 30162; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8.

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Stephen R. Kratzke,

Associate Administrator for Rulemaking.

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