

meet the color and content requirements as discussed below.

Second, the agency is requiring that the tire inflation pressure label and vehicle placard meet the following three requirements: (1) The tire inflation pressure information is in color—red, yellow, and black on a white background, (2) contain a black and white tire symbol icon in the upper left corner, 13 millimeters (.51 inches) wide and 14 millimeters (.55 inches) tall/high, and (3) include the phrases “Tire and Loading Information” and “Tire Information” and “See Owner’s Manual For Additional Information” in yellow text on a black background.

Third, the agency is replacing the vehicle capacity weight statement on the vehicle placard with the following sentence: “[t]he combined weight of occupants and cargo should never exceed XXX kg or XXX pounds.” The “XXX” amount equals the “vehicle capacity weight” of the vehicle as defined in FMVSS No. 110. The information is the same as that currently required to be placed on the vehicle placard by manufacturers.

Fourth, the agency is replacing the vehicle’s recommended tire size designation with the tire size designation for the tire installed as original equipment on the vehicle by the vehicle manufacturer. While in most instances these two numbers would be identical, this minor revision ensures that the consumer is provided with the correct tire inflation pressure information for the tire size actually installed on his vehicle as original equipment by the vehicle manufacturer. The original tire size designation and accompanying recommended inflation pressure will be indicated by the headings “original tire size” or “original size” on the placard or label.

This rule also requires that the placard or placard and label be located on the driver’s side B-pillar. If a vehicle does not have a B-pillar, then the placard and label must be placed on the edge of the driver’s door. If the vehicle does not have a driver’s side B-pillar and the driver’s side door edge is too narrow or does not exist, the placard or placard and label must be affixed to the inward facing surface of the vehicle next to the driver’s seating position.

Finally, with regard to vehicle requirements, the agency is requiring that owner’s manuals for light vehicles discuss the following five subject areas: (1) Tire labeling, (2) recommended tire inflation pressure, (3) glossary of tire terminology, (4) tire care, and (5) vehicle load limits. A single, reliable source containing the information listed above will aid consumers by providing

the information that they need to properly maintain their tires and adhere to recommended load limits.

## II. Petitions for Reconsideration

In response to the November 2002 final rule, NHTSA received petitions for reconsideration from tire and vehicle manufacturers and their associations. These petitions made requests addressing various aspects of the both tire and vehicle labeling, *e.g.*, Tire Identification Number (TIN) placement, placement of the vehicle placard and label, content of vehicle placard and label, and effective dates for the tire and vehicle labeling provisions. This final rule will, however, only address the requests regarding the effective date for the vehicle labeling provisions scheduled under the November 2002 final rule to become effective on September 1, 2003.

In January 2003, the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers (Alliance) and National Truck Equipment Association (NTEA) petitioned the agency to extend the effective date of the vehicle labeling provisions of the final rule. The Alliance petitioned the agency to change the effective date to September 1, 2004, or one year after addressing the issues raised in this petition, and/or issuing the final rule establishing the performance requirements of FMVSS No. 139, whichever is later. NTEA asked for an extension to September 1, 2004.

The Alliance argued that the new labeling requirements for vehicle placards, labels, and owner’s manuals were complex and there was a lack of justification of urgently providing this information to customers. The Alliance concluded that it would therefore be reasonable for the agency to allow additional lead time for implementation.

More specifically, the Alliance explained that the final rule will require major changes to the end-of-line manufacturing process and associated facilities. They stated that automotive plants are not currently equipped to compute certain loading information or print a multicolored label as required by the final rule. The vehicle manufacturers will need additional time to procure equipment to print labels and install computers with extensive programming to create the interface to generate occupant and cargo weight information required on each label. NTEA expressed similar concerns about their members’ ability to alter processes and acquire necessary equipment for the revised placards and labels during the provided lead time.

With regard to the new owner’s manual requirements, the Alliance stated that the writing and publishing of owner’s manuals is a 1-year to 2-year process. Because owner’s manuals are typically completed in April or May for the following model year, the Alliance argued that the current effective date does not allow sufficient lead time to make the major changes required by the final rule to every owner’s manual published.

In addition to considering the Alliance’s petition, the agency met with representatives from General Motors (GM) on March 13, 2003 and Ford Motor Company (Ford) on April 22, 2003. GM echoed the Alliance’s recommendations concerning the effective date. Ford briefed us in greater detail on why the 8 months lead time presents an obstacle to manufacturers. The new label contains VIN specific data, including payload, seating capacity and spare tire information, not previously required on the label. To comply with the new requirement, Ford is developing a new system and associated processes for their plants to allow them to manage the engineering data required for the label. Ford estimates that Spring 2004 is the earliest that it can have the system operational.

## III. Agency Decision

After considering the Alliance’s petitions and the discussions with GM and Ford, the agency is modifying the mandatory compliance date for vehicle labeling, including owner’s manual requirements. The agency concurs with the Alliance, GM and Ford that manufacturers of light trucks will need to make calculations regarding occupant and cargo weights that they have not needed to make in the past. For many car lines, manufacturers will have to calculate a number of different occupant/cargo weight combinations, depending on the specific model selected by the purchaser. For car lines with a variety of placard/label possibilities, manufacturers also will have to develop processes to ensure that the correct label is applied to each vehicle as it comes off the assembly line. Unlike other rules that may entail relatively greater challenges for small manufacturers, the number of new calculations required by this final rule may be especially challenging for manufacturers with many product lines. Additionally, for all car lines, manufacturers will be required to make extensive changes to their owner’s manuals and these changes typically require a longer lead time than that provided by the final rule. For these reasons, the agency is granting the