

vehicle that meets the requirements of the proposed rule. While alterers have more control, since they are only purchasing completed vehicles, they may have limited control over purchasing completed, certified vehicles in a manner that would allow them to meet the phase-in requirements. This is because, as with the final-stage manufacturers, the end customer often makes the final decision as to which type of vehicle to purchase. All multi-stage and altered vehicles manufactured on or after September 1, 2007 must be certified as complying with the new requirements.

We have tentatively decided to also exclude small volume manufacturers (*i.e.*, manufacturers of less than 5,000 vehicles per year produced for the U.S. market) from the phase-in because of their small size. However, NHTSA notes that, unlike the advanced air bag or tire pressure monitor system rulemakings, in which the technologies used to comply with the standard are relatively new, the technologies for lap/shoulder belts are well established. Accordingly, these manufacturers are unlikely to face the supply-and-demand problems anticipated in the afore-referenced rulemakings.

We have also tentatively decided to allow manufacturers of two or fewer carlines to opt out of the first year of the phase-in as long as 100% of their vehicles are certified as complying with the new requirements during the second year of the phase-in. NHTSA is considering allowing manufacturers to claim advanced credits for that second year, although we believe it is unlikely they would be needed.

The proposed regulatory text addressing the phase-in reporting requirements gathers together the phase-in requirements for all safety standards being phased-in and places them in a single part of the Code of Federal Regulations, 49 CFR Part 585. This would allow people henceforth to look to a single source for all reporting requirements associated with phase-ins. While no substantive changes are proposed for existing reporting requirements, some changes have been made for consistency of text. We encourage interested parties to review these changes to ensure that no substantive changes have been made.

## VI. Request for Comments

NHTSA seeks answers to the following questions, as well as comments on this notice in general.

1. What are the projected costs associated with increasing seat back strength to allow for lap/shoulder belts that are integrated into the seat back?

2. What are the potential benefits and disbenefits associated with requiring integral lap/shoulder belts for rear-facing designated seating positions, and what are the projected costs associated with such a requirement?

3. What are the potential technological impediments associated with requiring integral lap/shoulder belts for rear-facing designated seating positions?

4. What are the potential benefits and disbenefits associated with requiring integral lap/shoulder belts for forward-facing outboard designated seating positions adjacent to an aisle located next to the side of the vehicle and used for ingress and egress to more rearward seating positions, and what are the projected costs associated with such a requirement?

5. How many seats referenced in question 4, if any, currently use a lap/shoulder belt integrated into the vehicle seat or other technology that provides a lap/shoulder belt without impeding access to more rearward seats, and what are the estimated costs associated with such technologies?

6. How many swivel seats, if any, currently use a lap/shoulder belt integrated into the vehicle seat or other technology that provides a lap/shoulder belt, and what are the estimated costs associated with such technologies?

7. How many readily removable seats, if any, currently use a lap/shoulder belt integrated into the vehicle seat or other technology that provides a lap/shoulder belt, and what are the costs associated with such technologies?

8. What are the benefits and disbenefits associated with allowing detachable shoulder belts for seats other than those that are readily removable?

9. What are the potential benefits and disbenefits associated with requiring integral lap/shoulder belts for side-facing designated seating positions, and what are the projected costs associated with such a requirement?

10. NHTSA seeks information on side-facing seat studies in multiple crash modes. Should the agency prohibit the installation of Type 2 belts for side-facing seats?

11. What are the benefits and disbenefits associated with a requirement for integral lap/shoulder belts for the front center seats in passenger cars and LTVs, particularly vehicles that have a single row of seats?

12. What are the benefits and disbenefits associated with a requirement for integral lap/shoulder belts in all designated rear seating positions on buses, other than school buses, with a GVWR of 4,536 kg (10,000 lb) or less?

13. What are the potential technological impediments associated with requiring integral lap/shoulder belts for rear designated seating positions on buses, other than school buses, with a GVWR of 4,536 kg (10,000 lb) or less?

14. NHTSA requests comment on the proposed phase-in schedule. Should special provision be made for small volume manufacturers and manufacturers of two or fewer carlines? If so, please provide data and information that would justify such a provision.

15. Is it still appropriate to exclude particular vehicle types, *e.g.*, motor homes, walk-in vans, and driver positions in heavy trucks and buses, from requirements for lap/shoulder belts at designated seating positions?

16. Is there a need to develop comfort and convenience test procedures for rear designated seating positions?

17. NHTSA seeks information on seat belt fit studies conducted on rear seat occupants of varying size and stature. The agency also requests the results of any dynamic testing of any adjustable seat belt anchorages at different anchorage adjustments that would allow NHTSA to determine the appropriateness of requiring adjustable anchorages for rear lap/shoulder belts.

18. Is there a need to extend the frontal impact crash test requirements of FMVSS No. 208 to the rear seating positions?

19. What percentage of cars have lap/shoulder safety belts in the rear center seating positions in MY 2003 and what percentage are planned to have them in MY 2004? What percentage of LTVs have lap/shoulder safety belts in the rear center seating positions in MY 2003 and what percentage are planned to have them in MY 2004?

20. What is the cost of installing a manual lap/shoulder belt system in place of the current lap belt system in front and rear center seats of passenger cars and LTVs? How would these center seat systems differ in design and cost from current outboard systems?

## VII. Rulemaking Analyses and Notices

### A. Executive Order 12866 and DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures

NHTSA has considered the impact of this rulemaking action under Executive Order 12866 and the Department of Transportation's regulatory policies and procedures. This rulemaking is economically significant. Accordingly, the Office of Management and Budget has reviewed this rulemaking document under E.O. 12866, "Regulatory Planning and Review." The rulemaking action