

chosen systems are tested once per shift at the production facility. DaimlerChrysler also stated that 100% of its systems undergo a series of three functional tests prior to being shipped from the supplier to the vehicle assembly plant for installation in the vehicle.

DaimlerChrysler stated that its actual theft experience with Chrysler Town & Country vehicles, where currently an immobilizer system is not offered as standard equipment, indicates that these vehicles have a theft rate significantly lower than the 1990/1991 median theft rate of 3.5826. DaimlerChrysler stated that NHTSA's theft rates for the Chrysler Town & Country vehicles for model years 1996 through 2000 are 1.0661, 1.3094, 0.8257, 1.3543, and 0.9658, respectively. DaimlerChrysler states that vehicles subject to the parts marking requirements that subsequently are equipped with ignition immobilizer systems as standard equipment indicate that even lower theft rates can be expected from a vehicle equipped with standard ignition immobilizer systems.

DaimlerChrysler offered the Jeep Grand Cherokee vehicles as an example of vehicles subject to part 541 parts marking requirements that subsequently are equipped with ignition immobilizer systems as standard equipment. NHTSA's theft rates for the Jeep Grand Cherokee vehicles for model years 1995 through 1998 were 5.5545, 7.0188, 4.3163, and 4.3557, respectively, all significantly higher than the 1990/1991 median theft rate. DaimlerChrysler indicated that, since the introduction of immobilizer systems as standard equipment on the Jeep Grand Cherokee vehicles, the MY 1999 and 2000 theft rates are 2.5630 and 2.4701, respectively, significantly lower than the 1990/1991 median theft rate of 3.5826. The Jeep Grand Cherokee vehicles were granted an exemption from the parts marking requirements beginning with MY 2004 vehicles.

On the basis of this comparison, DaimlerChrysler has concluded that the proposed antitheft device is no less effective than those devices installed on lines for which NHTSA has already granted full exemption from the parts-marking requirements.

Based on the evidence submitted by DaimlerChrysler, the agency believes that the antitheft device for the Chrysler Town & Country vehicle line is likely to be as effective in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft as compliance with the parts-marking requirements of the Theft Prevention Standard (49 CFR part 541). The agency concludes that the device performs all four functions listed in 543.6(a)(3): Promoting activation;

preventing defeat or circumvention of the device by unauthorized persons; preventing operation of the vehicle by unauthorized entrants; and ensuring the reliability and durability of the device.

As required by 49 U.S.C. 33106 and 49 CFR 543.6(a)(4) and (5), the agency finds that DaimlerChrysler has provided adequate reasons for its belief that the antitheft device will reduce and deter theft. This conclusion is based on the information DaimlerChrysler provided about its antitheft device. For the foregoing reasons, the agency hereby grants in full DaimlerChrysler's petition for an exemption for the MY 2005 Chrysler Town & Country vehicle line from the parts-marking requirements of 49 CFR part 541. If DaimlerChrysler decides not to use the exemption for this line, it should formally notify the agency. If such a decision is made, the line must be fully marked according to the requirements under 49 CFR 541.5 and 541.6 (marking of major component parts and replacement parts).

NHTSA notes that if DaimlerChrysler wishes in the future to modify the device on which this exemption is based, the company may have to submit a petition to modify the exemption. Section 543.7(d) states that a part 543 exemption applies only to vehicles that belong to a line exempted under this part and equipped with the antitheft device on which the line's exemption is based. Further, Section 543.9(c)(2) provides for the submission of petitions "to modify an exemption to permit the use of an antitheft device similar to but differing from the one specified in that exemption."

The agency wishes to minimize the administrative burden that Section 543.9(c)(2) could place on exempted vehicle manufacturers and itself. The agency did not intend in drafting part 543 to require the submission of a modification petition for every change to the components or design of an antitheft device. The significance of many such changes could be *de minimis*. Therefore, NHTSA suggests that if the manufacturer contemplates making any changes the effects of which might be characterized as *de minimis*, it should consult the agency before preparing and submitting a petition to modify.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 33106; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50.

Issued on: August 1, 2003.

Stephen R. Kratzke,

Associate Administrator for Rulemaking.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

Release of Waybill Data

The Surface Transportation Board has received a request from Michael Behe representing FRN, LLC (WB604-7/31/03) for permission to use certain data from the Board's 2002 Carload Waybill Sample. A copy of these requests may be obtained from the Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis, and Administration.

The waybill sample contains confidential railroad and shipper data; therefore, if any parties object to these requests, they should file their objections with the Director of the Board's Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis, and Administration within 14 calendar days of the date of this notice. The rules for release of waybill data are codified at 49 CFR 1244.9.

Contact: Mac Frampton, (202) 565-1541.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-441 (Sub-No. 3X)]

SWKR Operating Co.—Abandonment Exemption—in Cochise County, AZ

On July 17, 2003, SWKR Operating Co. (SWKR) filed with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for exemption from the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon a 19.9-mile line of railroad extending from milepost 7.0 (formerly milepost 1040.15), near Curtis, to the end of the line at milepost 26.9 (formerly milepost 1055.8), near Charleston, in Cochise County, AZ. The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Codes 85602, 85615, and 85621, and includes the station of Fairbank at milepost 19.1.

The line does not contain federally granted rights-of-way. Any documentation in SWKR's possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it.

The interest of railroad employees will be protected by the conditions set forth in *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979).

By issuing this notice, the Board is instituting an exemption proceeding