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**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****National Highway Traffic Safety Administration****49 CFR Part 571**

[DOT Docket No. NHTSA-03-16194]

RIN 2127-AI09

**Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; Controls and Displays****AGENCY:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), DOT.**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

**SUMMARY:** In this document, we propose to update and expand our standard regulating motor vehicle controls and displays. The standard requires, among other things, that certain controls, telltales and indicators be identified by specified symbols or words. The NPRM proposes to require the mandatory use of symbols for the identification of these controls, telltales and indicators, as well as for additional controls, telltales and indicators. The NPRM also proposes to extend the standard's display requirements to vehicles with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) greater than 10,000 pounds. Finally, the NPRM proposes to update the standard's requirements for multi-function controls and displays, to make the requirements appropriate for advanced systems.

**DATES:** You should submit your comments early enough to ensure that Docket Management receives them not later than November 24, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit your comments [identified by the DOT DMS Docket Number cited in the heading of this document] by any of the following methods:

- Web Site: <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Follow the instructions for submitting comments on the DOT electronic docket site.

- Fax: 1-202-493-2251.

- Mail: Docket Management Facility; U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Nassif Building, Room PL-401, Washington, DC, 20590-001.

- Hand Delivery: Room PL-401 on the plaza level of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the

online instructions for submitting comments.

You may call the Docket at 202-366-9324. You may visit the Docket from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For non-legal issues, except for international harmonization issues, you may call Ms. Gayle Dalrymple, Office of Crash Avoidance Standards at (202) 366-5559. Her FAX number is (202) 493-2739.

For international harmonization issues, you may call Mr. Patrick Boyd, Office of Crash Avoidance Standards at (202) 366-6346. His FAX number is (202) 493-2739.

For legal issues, you may call Ms. Dorothy Nakama, Office of the Chief Counsel at (202) 366-2992. Her FAX number is (202) 366-3820.

You may send mail to all of these officials at National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh St., SW., Washington, DC 20590.

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**I. Background**

NHTSA issued the original version of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 101, *Controls and Displays*, in 1967 (32 FR 2408) as one of the initial FMVSSs. The standard applies to passenger cars, multipurpose passenger vehicles (MPVs), trucks, and buses.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the original standard was to assure the accessibility and visibility of motor vehicle controls and displays under all lighting conditions. The standard was designed to reduce the risk of safety hazards caused by the diversion of the driver's attention from the driving task to locate and identify the desired control or display, and to ensure that a driver wearing a safety belt could reach controls needed to accomplish the driving task.

At present, FMVSS 101 specifies requirements for the location (S5.1), identification (S5.2), and illumination (5.3) of various controls and displays. It specifies that those controls and displays must be accessible and visible to a driver properly seated wearing his or her safety belt. Table 1, "Identification and Illumination of Controls," and Table 2, "Identification and Illumination of Displays," indicate which controls and displays are subject to the identification requirements, and how they are to be identified, colored, and illuminated.

**II. Issues Raised in 1996 NPRM and 1997 Final Rule**

In 1996, pursuant to a March 4, 1995 directive entitled "Regulatory Reinvention Initiative" from the President to the heads of departments

<sup>1</sup> The requirements of the current Table 2, "Identification and Illustration of Displays" do not apply to vehicles of 10,000 pounds or more GVWR. We are proposing to change this. See section V.B.