Office of the Secretary of Transportation

§ 37.185 Subpart H—Over-the-Road Buses (OTRBs)

SOURCE: 63 FR 51690, Sept. 28, 1998, unless otherwise noted.

§ 37.181 Applicability dates.

This subpart applies to all private entities that operate OTRBs. The requirements of the subpart begin to apply to large operators beginning October 30, 2000 and to small operators beginning October 29, 2001.

§ 37.183 Purchase or lease of new OTRBs by operators of fixed-route systems.

The following requirements apply to private entities that are primarily in the business of transporting people, whose operations affect commerce, and that operate a fixed-route system, with respect to OTRBs delivered to them on or after the date on which this subpart applies to them:

(a) Large operators. If a large entity operates a fixed-route system, and purchases or leases a new OTRB for or in contemplation of use in that system, it shall ensure that the vehicle is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs.

(b) Small operators. If a small entity operates a fixed-route system, and purchases or leases a new OTRB for or in contemplation of use in that system, it must do one of the following two things:

(1) Ensure that the vehicle is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs; or

(2) Ensure that equivalent service, as defined in §37.105, is provided to individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs. To meet this equivalent service standard, the service provided by the operator must permit a wheelchair user to travel in his or her own mobility aid.

§ 37.185 Fleet accessibility requirement for OTRB fixed-route systems of large operators.

Each large operator subject to the requirements of §37.183 shall ensure that—
(a) By October 30, 2006 no less than 50 percent of the buses in its fleet with which it provides fixed-route service are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs.

(b) By October 29, 2012, 100 percent of the buses in its fleet with which it provides fixed-route service are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs.

(c) Request for time extension. An operator may apply to the Secretary for a time extension of the fleet accessibility deadlines of this section. If he or she grants the request, the Secretary sets a specific date by which the operator must meet the fleet accessibility requirement. In determining whether to grant such a request, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) Whether the operator has purchased or leased, since October 30, 2006 or 100 percent of such OTRBs by October 28, 2012;

(2) Whether the operator has purchased or leased, between October 28, 1998 and October 30, 2000, a number of new inaccessible OTRBs significantly exceeding the number of buses it would normally obtain in such a period;

(3) The compliance with all requirements of this part by the operator over the period between October 28, 1998 and the request for time extension.

§37.187 Interline service.

(a) When the general public can purchase a ticket or make a reservation with one operator for a fixed-route trip of two or more stages in which another operator provides service, the first operator must arrange for an accessible bus, or equivalent service, as applicable, to be provided for each stage of the trip to a passenger with a disability. The following examples illustrate the provisions of this paragraph (a):

Example 1. By going to Operator X’s ticket office or calling X for a reservation, a passenger can buy or reserve a ticket from Point A through to Point C, transferring at intermediate Point B to a bus operated by Operator Y. Operator X is responsible for communicating immediately with Operator Y to ensure that Y knows that a passenger needing accessible transportation or equivalent service, as applicable, is traveling from Point B to Point C. By immediate communication, we mean that the ticket or reservation agent for Operator X, by phone, fax, computer, or other instantaneous means, contacts Operator Y the minute the reservation or ticketing transaction with the passenger, as applicable, has been completed. It is the responsibility of each carrier to know how to contact carriers with which it interlines (e.g., Operator X must know Operator Y’s phone number).

Example 2. Operator X fails to provide the required information in a timely manner to Operator Y. Operator Y is responsible for compensating the passenger for the consequent unavailability of an accessible bus or equivalent service, as applicable, on the B-C leg of the interline trip.

(b) Each operator retains the responsibility for providing the transportation required by this subpart to the passenger for its portion of an interline trip. The following examples illustrate the provisions of this paragraph (b):

Example 1. In Example 1 to paragraph (a) of this section, Operator X provides the required information to Operator Y in a timely fashion. However, Operator Y fails to provide an accessible bus or equivalent service to the passenger at Point B as the rules require. Operator Y is responsible for compensating the passenger as provided in §37.199.

Example 2. Operator X provides the required information to Operator Y in a timely fashion. However, the rules require Operator Y to provide an accessible bus on 48 hours’ advance notice (i.e., as a matter of interim service under §37.189(a)) or service by a small mixed-service operator under §37.191), and the passenger has purchased the ticket or made the reservation for the interline trip only 8 hours before Operator Y’s bus leaves from Point B to go to Point C. In this situation, Operator Y is not responsible for providing an accessible bus to the passenger at Point B, any more than that it would be had the passenger directly contacted Operator Y to travel from Point B to Point C.

(c) All fixed-route operators involved in interline service shall ensure that they have the capacity to receive communications at all times concerning interline service for passengers with disabilities. The following examples illustrate the provisions of this paragraph (c):

Example 1. Operator Y’s office is staffed only during normal weekday business hours. Operator Y must have a means of receiving communications from carriers with which it