

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Maritime Administration****[Docket No. MARAD-98-3330]****Information Collection Available for Public Comments and Recommendations****ACTION:** Notice and Request for Comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 this notice announces the Maritime Administration's (MARAD's) intentions to request extension of approval for three years of a currently approved information collection.

**DATES:** Comments should be submitted on or before March 27, 1998.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Patricia Ann Thomas, Office of Maritime Labor, Training and Safety, MAR-250, Room 7302, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Telephone number 202-366-2646 or fax number 202-493-2288. Copies of this collection can also be obtained from that office.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Title of Collection:* Merchant Marine Medals and Awards.

*Type of Request:* Extension of a currently approved information collection.

*OMB Control Number:* 2133-0506.

*Form Number:* No form is required for this collection.

*Expiration Date of Approval:* September 30, 1998.

*Summary of Collection of Information:* This information collection provides the Maritime Administration with a method for documenting and processing requests for merchant marine medals and decorations to masters, officers, and crew members of U.S. ships in recognition of their service in areas of danger during World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War and Operation DESERT STORM and the replacement of previously issued awards.

*Need and Use of the Information:* The information collection is used by MARAD personnel to process and verify requests for service awards. The issuance of awards is based upon requests from the public.

*Description of Respondents:* Eligible merchant seamen.

*Annual Responses:* 2500 responses.

*Annual Burden:* 2500 hours.

*Comments:* Signed, written comments should refer to the docket number that appears at the top of this document and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk,

U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590-0001. Specifically, address whether this information collection is necessary for proper performance of the function of the agency and will have practical utility, accuracy of the burden estimates, ways to minimize this burden, and ways to enhance quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected. All comments received will be available for examination at the above address between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., e.t. Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays. An electronic version of this document is available on the World Wide Web at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Dated: January 20, 1998.

By Order of the Maritime Administrator,

**Joel C. Richard,**

*Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 98-1710 Filed 1-23-98; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-81-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****National Highway Traffic Safety Administration****[Docket No. NHTSA-97-3122; Notice 2]****Dan Hill & Associates, Inc.; Grant of Application for Temporary Exemption From Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 224**

This document grants the application by Dan Hill & Associates, Inc., of Norman, Oklahoma, for a one-year temporary exemption from Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 224 *Rear Impact Protection*. The basis of the application was that compliance would cause substantial economic hardship to a manufacturer that has tried in good faith to comply with the standard.

Notice of receipt of the application was published on November 21, 1997, and an opportunity afforded for comment (62 FR 62398).

The applicant manufactures and sells a horizontal discharge trailer ("Flow Boy") that is used in the road construction industry to deliver asphalt and other road building materials to the construction site. The Flow Boy is designed to connect with and latch onto various paving machines ("pavers"). The Flow Boy, with its hydraulically controlled horizontal discharge system, discharges hot mix asphalt at a controlled rate into a paver which overlays the road surface with asphalt material.

Standard No. 224 requires, effective January 26, 1998, that all trailers with a GVWR of 4536 Kg or more, including

Flow Boy trailers, be fitted with a rear impact guard that conforms to Standard No. 223 *Rear impact guards*. Installation of the rear impact guard will prevent the Flow Boy from connecting to the paver. Thus, Flow Boy trailers will no longer be functional and contractors will be forced to use standard dump body trucks or trailers with their inherent limitations.

The applicant, which manufactured 81 Flow Boy trailers in 1996 (plus 21 other trailers), asked for a one-year exemption in order to explore the feasibility of a rear impact guard that will allow the Flow Boy trailer to connect to a conventional paver. In the absence of an exemption, it believes that approximately 60 percent of its work force would have to be laid off. Its gross revenues would decrease by \$6,000,000 (these have averaged \$13,885,000 over its 1994, 1995, and 1996 fiscal years). Present studies show that the placement of the retractable rear impact guard would likely catch excess asphalt as it was discharged into the pavement hopper. Further, the increased cost of the Flow Body would likely cause contractors to choose the cheaper alternative of dump trucks. Finally, the applicant asserted that the increased weight of the retractable rear impact guard would significantly decrease the payload of the Flow Boy.

Applicant sent its Product Specialist to Germany in 1994 to view under-ride protection guards installed by a German customer on Flow Boy trailers but the technology proved inapplicable because of differences between German and American pavers. Manufacturers of paving machines are not interested in redesigning their equipment to accommodate a Flow Boy with a rear impact guard. The applicant has contacted a British manufacturer of a retractable rear impact guard but the information received to date does not look encouraging. If an exemption is granted, the applicant will continue to explore the feasibility of a retractable rear guard that allows connection with a paver.

The applicant believes that an exemption would be in the public interest and consistent with traffic safety objectives because the Flow Boy aids in the construction of the national road system. It spends very little of its operating life on the highway and the likelihood of its being involved in a rear-end collision is minimal. In addition, the design of the Flow Boy is such that the rear tires act as a buffer and reduce the likelihood of impact with the trailer.

No comments were received in response to the **Federal Register** notice.