

but not required that 10 copies be submitted.

All comments received before the close of business on the closing date indicated above will be considered, and will be available for examination in the docket at the above address both before and after that date. To the extent possible, comments filed after the closing date will also be considered. Notice of final action on the petition will be published in the **Federal Register** pursuant to the authority indicated below.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 30141(a)(1)(A) and (b)(1); 49 CFR 593.8; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8.

Issued: August 4, 1998.

Marilynne Jacobs,

Director, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance.
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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA 98-4275; Notice 1]

American Honda Motor Company, Inc.; Application for Renewal of Temporary Exemption From Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 122

American Honda Motor Co., Inc., of Torrance, California ("Honda"), has applied for a renewal of its temporary exemption from the fade and water recovery requirements of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 122, *Motorcycle Brake Systems*. The basis of the application for renewal is that an exemption would make easier the development or field evaluation of a new motor vehicle safety feature providing a safety level at least equal to the safety level of the standard.

This notice of receipt of an application is published in accordance with the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 30113(b)(2) and does not represent any judgment of the agency on the merits of the application.

The agency previously granted Honda NHTSA Temporary Exemption No. 97-1, expiring September 1, 1998, from the following requirements of 49 CFR 571.122 Standard No. 122 *Motorcycle Brake Systems*: S5.4.1 Baseline check—minimum and maximum pedal forces, S5.4.2 Fade, S5.4.3 Fade recovery, S5.7.2 Water recovery test, and S6.10 Brake actuation forces (62 FR 52372, October 7, 1997). This exemption covered Honda's 1998 CBR1100XX motorcycle. Honda has applied for an extension of its exemption to September

1, 1999, to cover the 1999 model CBR1100XX motorcycle, and "all unsold 1998 model year" CBR1100XX vehicles. However, it was unnecessary for Honda to have included unsold vehicles in its request. NHTSA's temporary exemptions apply as of the date of manufacture and certification of an exempted vehicle, and continue to cover that vehicle even if it is sold after the expiration date of the exemption.

Honda's original and renewed request concerned exemption "from the requirement of the minimum hand-lever force of five pounds in the base line check for the fade and water recovery tests." It is evaluating the marketability of an "improved" motorcycle brake system setting which is currently applied to the model sold in Europe. The difference in setting is limited to a softer master cylinder return spring in the European version. Using the softer spring results in a "more predictable (linear) feeling during initial brake lever application." Although "the change allows a more predictable rise in brake gain, the on-set of braking occurs at lever forces slightly below the five pound minimum" specified in Standard No. 122. Honda considers that motorcycle brake systems have continued to evolve and improve since Standard No. 122 was adopted in 1972, and that one area of improvement is brake lever force which has gradually been reduced. However, the five-pound minimum specification "is preventing further development and improvement" of brake system characteristics. This limit, when applied to the CBR1100XX "results in an imprecise feeling when the rider applies low-level front brake lever inputs." On November 5, 1997, Honda submitted a petition for rulemaking to amend Standard No. 122 to eliminate the minimum brake actuation force requirement. As of June 19, 1998, when Honda applied for a renewal of its application, NHTSA had not yet decided whether to grant the petition. The agency notes that it anticipates granting the petition and commencing a rulemaking proceeding this fall.

The 1999 model of the CBR1100XX "will be nearly identical" to the 1998 model "with two notable exceptions: the engine air/fuel delivery system will change from carburetors to electronic fuel injection, and the brake system will also have a minor change." This change involves characteristics of the pressure control valve, but is "limited to high input force range, and it will not affect the baseline check result nor other test results in FMVSS 122."

The CBR1100XX is equipped with Honda's Linked Brake System (LBS)

which is designed to engage both front and rear brakes when either the front brake lever or the rear brake pedal is used. The LBS differs from other integrated systems in that it allows the rider to choose which wheel gets the majority of braking force, depending on which brake control the rider uses.

According to Honda, the overall braking performance remains unchanged from a conforming motorcycle. Exempted CBR1100XX vehicles meet "the stopping distance requirement but at lever forces slightly below the minimum."

Honda argued in 1997 that granting an exemption would be in the public interest and consistent with objectives of traffic safety because it

* * * should improve a rider's ability to precisely modulate the brake force at low-level brake lever input forces. Improving the predictability, even at very low-level brake lever input, increases the rider's confidence in the motorcycle's brake system.

This year Honda repeats those arguments and submits that a renewal allows further refinement and development of the LBS. It believes that the LBS has "many desirable characteristics—especially during emergency braking—that could reduce the number of rear brake lock-up crashes." Honda has produced about 1200 motorcycles under Exemption 97-1, and anticipates that it will produce about 1,500 vehicles under a renewal.

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the application described above. Comments should refer to the docket number and the notice number, and be submitted to: Docket Management, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. It is requested but not required that 10 copies be submitted.

All comments received before the close of business on the comment closing date indicated below will be considered, and will be available for examination in the docket at the above address both before and after that date. To the extent possible, comments filed after the closing date will also be considered. Notice of final action on the application will be published in the **Federal Register** pursuant to the authority indicated below.

Comment closing date: September 9, 1998.

(49 U.S.C. 30113; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8)

Issued on August 4, 1998.

L. Robert Shelton,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

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