Docket Clerk, U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL–401, Nassif Building, Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20590.

Comments may also be submitted by electronic means via the internet at http://dms.dot.gov/submit/. You may call Docket Management at (202) 366–9324. You may visit the Docket Room to inspect and copy comments at the address above between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday, except holidays. An electronic version of this document is available on the World Wide Web at http://dms.dot.gov. Comments must be received by close of business November 24, 2000.

This notice is published as a matter of discretion, and the fact of its publication should in no way be considered a favorable or unfavorable decision on the application, as filed, or as may be amended. We will consider all comments submitted in a timely fashion, and will take such action thereto as may be deemed appropriate.

Dated: November 6, 2000.

By order of the Maritime Administrator.

Joel C. Richard,

Secretary, Maritime Administration.

[FR Doc. 00–28827 Filed 11–8–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–81–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Announcing the Third Quarterly Meeting of the Crash Injury Research and Engineering Network

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), DOT.

ACTION: Meeting announcement.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the Third Quarterly Meeting of members of the Crash Injury Research and Engineering Network. CIREN is a collaborative effort to conduct research on crashes and injuries at nine Level 1 Trauma Centers which are linked by a computer network. Researchers can review data and share expertise, which could lead to a better understanding of crash injury mechanisms and the design of safer vehicles.

DATE AND TIME: The meeting is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on November 30, 2000.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in Room 6200–04 of the U.S. Department of Transportation Building, which is located at 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The CIREN System has been established and crash cases have been entered into the database by each Center. NHTSA has held three Annual Conferences (two in Detroit and one in conjunction with STAPP in San Diego) where CIREN research results were presented. Further information about the three previous CIREN conferences is available through the NHTSA website at: http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/include/bio_and_trauma/ciren-final.htm. NHTSA held the first quarterly meeting on May 5, 2000, with a topic of lower extremity injuries in motor vehicle crashes and the second quarterly meeting on July 21, 2000, with a topic of side impact crashes. Information from the May 5 and July 21 meetings are also available through the NHTSA website.

NHTSA plans to continue holding quarterly meetings on a regular basis to disseminate CIREN information to interested parties. This is the third such meeting. The topic for this meeting is thoracic injuries in motor vehicle crashes. Subsequent meetings have tentatively been scheduled for March and June 2001. These quarterly meetings will be in lieu of an annual CIREN conference.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mrs. Donna Stemski, Office of Human-Centered Research, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Room 6206, Washington, DC 20590, telephone: (202) 366–5662.

Issued on: November 2, 2000.

Raymond P. Owings,

Associate Administrator for Research and Development, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

[FR Doc. 00–28700 Filed 11–8–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–59–U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA 2000–6947, Notice 2]

Subaru of America, Inc.; Grant of Application for Decision of Inconsequential Non-Compliance

This notice grants the application by Subaru of America, Inc. (Subaru) to be exempted from the notification and remedy requirements of 49 U.S.C. 30118 and 30120 with respect to a noncompliance with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 209, ''Seat Belt Assemblies.'' Subaru has filed an appropriate report pursuant to 49 CFR Part 573, ''Defect and Noncompliance Reports.'' Pursuant to 49 CFR Part 556, Subaru has also applied to be exempted from the notification and remedy requirements of 49 U.S.C. Chapter 301, ''Motor Vehicle Safety.'' The basis of the grant is that the noncompliance is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety.

Notice of receipt of the application was published March 9, 2000, and an opportunity afforded for comment (65 FR 12615). The closing date was April 10, 2000. No comments were received.

Description of Noncompliance

Replacement seat belt assemblies were packaged without instruction sheets required by FMVSS No. 209 S4.1(k) and (l). All of the seat belt assemblies involved meet all other requirements of FMVSS No. 209.

Approximately 522 sets of replacement seat belt assemblies manufactured and sold were involved.

Subaru Submitted the Following in Support of Its Application

In accordance with FMVSS No. 209, S4.1(k) replacement seat belt assemblies must be accompanied by installation instructions for installing the assembly in a motor vehicle. These instructions ''shall state whether the assembly is for universal installation or for installation only in specifically stated motor vehicles and shall include at least those items specified in SAE Recommended Practice J800c, Motor Vehicle Seat Belt Installation, November 1973.

Subaru understands SAE Recommended Practice J800c, it deals primarily with the threading of webbing and location and drilling of anchorage holes and is not relevant here since all affected Subaru vehicles have pre-existing anchorage holes. All of the affected replacement seat belt assemblies are supplied ready for use with fully threaded webbing.

Subaru believes that S4.1(k) is intended to prevent the mismatch of a seat belt assembly in the wrong model vehicle or the wrong seating position and prevent improper installation of a seat belt at the correct position.

In accordance with FMVSS No. 209, S4.1(l) requires instructions addressing the importance of warning seat belts ''snugly and properly located on the body'' and information about seat belt maintenance. Subaru believes that since the owner's manual already provides proper usage and maintenance information to the vehicle owner and operator, incorrect usage and maintenance by the vehicle owner is highly unlikely.

Subaru has corrected all the replacement seat belt assembly inventory for shipment to dealers and will provide additional instruction documents to dealers with inventory subject to the noncompliance.

Replacement seat belt assemblies sold at retail to customers has not resulted in owner complaints as a result of this inconsequential noncompliance.

Subaru believes that, based upon the information described above, this is an inconsequential noncompliance.

NHTSA has reviewed Subaru's application and, for the reasons

discussed below, has decided that the noncompliance of the Subaru seat belt assemblies is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety.

First, we note that seat belt assemblies were distributed through the Subaru parts system, without the required ''installation instructions.'' FMVSS No. 209, S4.1(k), requires that seat belt assemblies sold as replacement equipment have ''installation instructions'' to ensure that the correct seat belt is selected as a replacement part, and that the seat belt is installed correctly. Subaru assures us that its parts ordering system and the box labels are quite specific and adequate to ensure that the proper seat belt is provided as a replacement part. We also believe that Subaru is correct in stating that the parts are so specific that if a mechanic tried to install the wrong part, the seat belt would not fit properly. Thus, we conclude that adequate safeguards are being taken by Subaru to ensure that the correct replacement seat belts are provided.

There seems to be little need for the installation instructions with replacements for original equipment seat belts. The SAE J800c Recommended Practice incorporated in FMVSS No. 209 appears to have been written as a guide on how to install a seat belt where one does not exist. The Recommended Practice discusses such things as how to determine the correct location for anchorages, how to create adequate anchorages and how to properly attach webbing to the newly installed anchorages. These instructions do not apply to today's replacement market. Additionally, vehicle manufacturers provide service manuals on how seat belts should be replaced. NHTSA does not believe the ''how to'' instructions are necessary in this case.

Next, we note that the subject seat belt assemblies were distributed without the required ''usage and maintenance instructions'' specified in FMVSS No. 209, S4.1(l), which requires that seat belt assemblies sold as replacement equipment have owner instructions on how to wear the seat belt and how to properly thread the webbing on seat belts where the webbing is not permanently attached. NHTSA believes that the proper usage is adequately described in the vehicle owner's manual. NHTSA does not believe that instructions about the proper threading of webbing is applicable to modern original equipment automobile seat belt systems. This second instruction sheet is either duplicated in the owner's manual or not applicable.

In consideration of the foregoing, NHTSA has decided that the applicant has met its burden of persuasion that the noncompliance that it describes is inconsequential to safety. The determination is limited to the vehicles and equipment covered by the Part 573 report. All products manufactured on and after the date Subaru determined the existence of this noncompliance must fully comply with the requirements of FMVSS No. 209.

Accordingly, Subaru's application is granted, and the applicant is exempted from providing the notification of the noncompliance that is required by 49 U.S.C. 30118 and from remedying the noncompliance, as required by 49 U.S.C. 30120.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 30118(b), 30120(h), delegations of authority at 49 CFR 150 and 501.8.

Issued on: November 6, 2000.

Stephen R. Kratzke,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

[FR Doc. 00–28835 Filed 11–8–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–59–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[Released Rates Decision No. MC–999]

Notice of Filing of an Application To Amend Released Rate Provisions (and Corresponding Limits of Liability) for Motor-Carrier Shipments of Household Goods, and Request for Public Comments

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

SUMMARY: The Household Goods Carriers' Bureau Committee (Committee), on behalf of its member motor carriers, seeks authority to amend Released Rates Decision No. MC–999 by changing the terms under which the carriers would limit their liability for damage to, or loss of, household-goods shipments, and thus changing the resulting charges to shippers.

DATES: Comments are due December 11, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Send comments (an original and 10 copies) referring to Released Rates Decision No. MC–999, to: Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423–0001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: James W. Greene, (202) 565–1578, or Lawrence C. Herzig, (202) 565–1576. [TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 565–1695.]

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Background

Under 49 U.S.C. 14706(a)(1), motor carriers of household goods ordinarily are liable for the actual loss or injury that they cause to the property they transport.[1] However, under 49 U.S.C. 14706(f), household-goods carriers may establish ''released rates,'' under which the carriers' liability is limited to a value established by written declaration of the shipper or by a written agreement between the carrier and shipper, if they obtain permission from the Board.[2]

2. Current Provisions

The released rates currently offered by most household-goods carriers are based upon authority granted by the Board's predecessor, the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), in *Released Rates of Motor Common Carriers of Household Goods,* 9 I.C.C.2d 523 (1993). Under the plan approved in 1993, the freight charges paid by a household-goods shipper depend upon the level of liability assumed by the carrier. A shipper pays the carrier's lowest rate, the ''base rate'' when it agrees, by indicating in writing on the bill of lading, that the carrier's liability will be 60 cents per pound per article for goods lost or damaged, but not more than the actual, depreciated value of the item. According to the Committee, the percentage of household-goods shippers choosing to move their goods under the 60-cents-per-pound limitation on liability remained relatively constant from 1985 through 1996, decreasing from 33.1 to 31.2 percent.[3]

A second option available to shippers allows them to protect more of the value of the shipment for a higher transportation charge. The shipper declares a lump sum value for the entire shipment, and pays the base rate plus a charge of 70 cents for each $100, or fraction, of the ''declared value'' of the shipment. Under this second option, there is a minimum valuation: if the shipper's declared value is less than $1.25 times the weight (in pounds) of the shipment, the minimum declared value of $1.25 per pound will apply instead. The recovery under this option for lost goods is the actual (depreciated) value of the (typically used) goods up to the declared value of the shipment.[4]

[1] Carriers are not liable for loss or injury that they do not cause, such as losses due to acts of God.

[2] Motor carriers of freight other than household goods may establish released rates without having to obtain the Board's permission. 40 U.S.C. 14706(c)(1)(A).

[3] The 60-cent limitation predates the 1993 plan. *See Household Goods Carriers' Bureau* v. *ICC,* 584 F.2d 437, 439 (D.C. Cir. 1978).

[4] Of course, if the carrier lost an item that was new and unused, it would be liable for the