

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Institute of Standards and Technology****15 CFR Part 270**

[Docket No: 021224331-2331-01]

RIN 0693-AB52

**Procedures for Implementation of the National Construction Safety Team Act**

**AGENCY:** National Institute of Standards and Technology, United States Department of Commerce.

**ACTION:** Interim final rule; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Technology Administration, United States Department of Commerce, requests comments on an interim final rule pertaining to the implementation of the National Construction Safety Team Act ("Act"). This interim final rule with a request for public comments contains general provisions regarding implementation of the Act and establishes procedures for the collection and preservation of evidence obtained and the protection of information created as part of investigations conducted pursuant to the Act.

**DATES:** This rule is effective on January 30, 2003. Comments must be received no later than March 3, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on the interim final rule must be submitted to: Dr. James E. Hill, Deputy Director, Building and Fire Research Laboratory, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Mail Stop 8600, Gaithersburg, MD 20899-8600, telephone number (301) 975-5900.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. James E. Hill, Deputy Director, Building and Fire Research Laboratory, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Mail Stop 8600, Gaithersburg, MD 20899-8600, telephone number (301) 975-5900.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Background**

The National Construction Safety Team Act, Pub. L. 107-231, was enacted to provide for the establishment of investigative teams ("Teams") to assess building performance and emergency response and evacuation procedures in the wake of any building failure that has resulted in substantial loss of life or that posed significant potential of substantial loss of life. The purpose of investigations by Teams is to improve the safety and structural integrity of buildings in the United States. A Team

will (1) Establish the likely technical cause or causes of the building failure; (2) evaluate the technical aspects of evacuation and emergency response procedures; (3) recommend, as necessary, specific improvements to building standards, codes, and practices based on the findings made pursuant to (1) and (2); and recommend any research and other appropriate actions needed to improve the structural safety of buildings, and improve evacuation and emergency response procedures, based on the findings of the investigation. Section 2(c)(1) of the Act requires that the Director develop procedures for certain activities to be carried out under the Act as follows: Regarding conflicts of interest related to service on a Team; defining the circumstances under which the Director will establish and deploy a Team; prescribing the appropriate size of Teams; guiding the disclosure of information under section 7 of the Act; guiding the conduct of investigations under the Act; identifying and prescribing appropriate conditions for provision by the Director of additional resources and services Teams may need; to ensure that investigations under the Act do not impede and are coordinated with any search and rescue efforts being undertaken at the site of the building failure; for regular briefings of the public on the status of the investigative proceedings and findings; guiding the Teams in moving and preserving evidence; providing for coordination with Federal, State, and local entities that may sponsor research or investigations of building failures; and regarding other issues.

NIST plans to publish two separate documents in the **Federal Register** regarding procedures to implement the Act. This interim final rule with a request for public comments contains general provisions regarding implementation of the Act and establishes procedures for the collection and preservation of evidence obtained and the protection of information created as part of investigations conducted pursuant to the Act, including guiding the disclosure of information under section 7 of the Act (§§ 270.350, 270.351, and 270.352) and guiding the Teams in moving and preserving evidence (§ 270.330). These general provisions and procedures, which will comprise Subparts A and D of the rule, are necessary to the conduct of the investigation of the World Trade Center disaster, already underway, and are effective immediately. At a later date, NIST plans to publish in the **Federal Register** a notice of proposed

rulemaking and request for comments, establishing the remaining procedures necessary for implementation of the Act.

*Request for Public Comment:* Persons interested in commenting on the interim final rule should submit their comments in writing to the above address. All comments received in response to this notice will become part of the public record and will be available for inspection and copying at the Department of Commerce Central Reference and Records Inspection facility, room 6228, Hoover Building, Washington, DC 20230.

**Additional Information****Executive Order 12866**

This rule has been determined not to be significant under section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866.

**Executive Order 12612**

This rule does not contain policies with Federalism implications sufficient to warrant preparation of a Federalism assessment under Executive Order 12612.

**Administrative Procedure Act**

Prior notice and an opportunity for public comment are not required for this rule of agency organization, procedure, or practice. 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(A).

**Regulatory Flexibility Act**

Because notice and comment are not required under 5 U.S.C. 553, or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) are inapplicable. As such, a regulatory flexibility analysis is not required, and none has been prepared.

**Paperwork Reduction Act**

Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, no person is required to, nor shall any person be subject to penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information, subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.

There are no collections of information involved in this rulemaking.

**National Environmental Policy Act**

This rule will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental assessment or Environmental Impact Statement is not required to be prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

**List of Subjects in 15 CFR Part 270**

Administrative practice and procedure; Buildings and facilities; Disaster assistance; Evidence; Investigations; National Institute of Standards and Technology; Science and technology; Subpoena.

Dated: January 23, 2003.

**Karen H. Brown,**  
*Deputy Director.*

For reasons set forth in the preamble, the National Institute of Standards and Technology amends 15 CFR chapter II to add a new Subchapter G, part 270, as follows:

**Subchapter G—National Construction Safety Teams****PART 270—NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION SAFETY TEAMS****Subpart A—General**

Sec.

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270.350 Freedom of Information Act.

270.351 Protection of voluntarily submitted information.

270.352 Public safety information

**Authority:** Pub. L. 107–231, 116 Stat. 1471 (15 U.S.C. 3701 note).

**Subpart A—General****§ 270.1 Description of rule; purpose; applicability.**

(a) The National Construction Safety Team Act (the Act) (Pub. L. 107–231) provides for the establishment of investigative teams to assess building performance and emergency response and evacuation procedures in the wake of any building failure that has resulted in substantial loss of life or that posed significant potential of substantial loss of life.

(b) The purpose of investigations by Teams is to improve the safety and structural integrity of buildings in the United States.

(c) This part is applicable to the establishment and deployment of Teams and the conduct of investigations under the Act.

**§ 270.2 Definitions used in this part.**

The following definitions are applicable to this part:

**Act.** The National Construction Safety Team Act (Pub. L. 107–231, 116 Stat. 1471).

**Advisory Committee.** The National Construction Safety Team Advisory Committee.

**Credentials.** Photo identification issued by a Federal or state government entity.

**Director.** The Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

**Evidence.** Any document, record, book, artifact, building component, material, witness testimony, or physical evidence collected pursuant to an investigation.

**General Counsel.** The General Counsel of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

**Investigation participant.** Any person participating in an investigation under the Act, including all Team members, other NIST employees participating in the investigation, private sector experts, university experts, representatives of professional organizations, employees of other Federal, state, or local government entities, and other contractors.

**Lead Investigator.** A Team member who is a NIST employee and is designated by the Director to lead a Team.

**Team.** A team established by the Director and deployed to conduct an investigation under the Act.

**NIST.** The National Institute of Standards and Technology.

**Subpart B—[Reserved]****Subpart C—[Reserved]****Subpart D—Collection and Preservation of Evidence; Information Created Pursuant to an Investigation; and Protection of Information****§ 270.300 Scope.**

During the course of an investigation conducted pursuant to the Act, evidence will be collected, and information will be created by the Team, NIST, and other investigation participants. This subpart sets forth the policy and procedures for the collection, preservation, and protection of evidence obtained and information created pursuant to an investigation.

**§ 270.301 Policy.**

Evidence collected and information created by Team members and all other investigation participants will be collected, preserved, and protected in accordance with the procedures set forth in this subpart.

**Collection of Evidence****§ 270.310 Evidence collected by investigation participants who are not NIST employees.**

Upon receipt of information pursuant to an investigation under the Act, each investigation participant who is not a NIST employee shall:

(a) As soon as practicable, transfer the original evidence to NIST, and retain a copy of the evidence only if necessary to carry out their duties under the investigation; and

(b) For any evidence that cannot reasonably be duplicated, retain the evidence in accordance with NIST procedures for preserving evidence as described in § 270.330 of this subpart, and upon completion of the duties for which retention of the evidence is necessary, transfer the evidence to NIST.

**§ 270.311 Collection of evidence.**

(a) In the course of an investigation, evidence normally will be collected following the procedures described in §§ 270.312 through 270.315 of this subpart.

(b) Upon a written showing by the Lead Investigator of urgent and

compelling reasons to believe that evidence may be destroyed, or that a witness may become unavailable, were the procedures described in §§ 270.312 through 270.314 of this subpart followed, the Director, with the concurrence of the General Counsel, may immediately issue a subpoena for such evidence or testimony, pursuant to § 270.315 of this subpart.

**§ 270.312 Voluntary submission of evidence.**

After the Director establishes and deploys a Team, members of the public are encouraged to voluntarily submit to the Team non-privileged evidence that is relevant to the subject matter of the pending investigation. Confidential information will only be accepted pursuant to an appropriate nondisclosure agreement.

**§ 270.313 Requests for evidence.**

(a) After the Director establishes and deploys a Team, the Lead Investigator, or their designee, may request the testimony of any person by deposition, upon oral examination or written questions, and may request documents or other physical evidence without seeking prior approval of the Director.

(b) Requests for responses to written questions will be made in writing and shall include:

(1) A statement that the request is made to gather evidence necessary to an investigation being conducted under the Act;

(2) Identification of the person whose responses are sought;

(3) Contact information for the person to whom the responses should be submitted;

(4) The date and time by which the responses are requested;

(5) A statement that the questions for which responses are sought are attached; and

(6) Contact information for the person to whom questions or problems regarding the request should be addressed.

(c) Requests for documents or other physical evidence will be made in writing and shall include:

(1) A statement that the request is made to gather evidence necessary to an investigation being conducted under the Act;

(2) A description of the documents or other physical evidence sought;

(3) Identification of the person or persons to whom the request is made;

(4) A request that each person to whom the request is directed produce and permit inspection and copying of the documents and physical evidence in the possession, custody, or control of

that person at a specific time and place; and

(5) Contact information for the person to whom questions or problems regarding the request should be addressed.

(d) Requests for witness testimony will be made in writing and shall include:

(1) The name of the person whose testimony is requested;

(2) The date, time, and place of the deposition;

(3) A statement that the person whose testimony is requested may be accompanied by an attorney; and

(4) Contact information for the person to whom questions or problems regarding the request should be addressed.

**§ 270.314 Negotiations.**

The Lead Investigator may enter into discussions with appropriate parties to address problems identified with the submission of evidence requested pursuant to § 270.312 of this subpart. Should negotiations fail to result in the submission of such evidence, a subpoena may be issued pursuant to § 270.315.

**§ 270.315 Subpoenas.**

(a) *General.* Subpoenas requiring the attendance of witnesses or the production of documentary or physical evidence for the purpose of taking depositions or at a hearing may be issued only under the signature of the Director with the concurrence of the General Counsel, but may be served by any person designated by the Director.

(b) *Determination whether to issue a subpoena.* In determining whether to issue a subpoena, the Director will consider the following factors:

(1) Whether the testimony, documentary, or physical evidence is required for an investigation being conducted pursuant to the Act;

(2) Whether the evidence sought is relevant to the purpose of the investigation;

(3) Whether NIST already has the evidence in its possession; and

(4) Whether the evidence required is described with specificity.

(c) *Contents of a subpoena.* A subpoena issued by the Director will contain the following:

(1) A statement that the subpoena is issued by the Director pursuant to section 5 of the Act;

(2) A description of the documents or physical evidence or the subject matter of the testimony required by the subpoena;

(3) A command that each person to whom it is directed attend and give

testimony or produce and permit inspection and copying of designated books, documents or physical evidence in the possession, custody or control of that person at a time and place specified in the subpoena;

(4) A statement that any person whose testimony is required by the subpoena may be accompanied by an attorney; and

(5) The signature of the Director.

(d) *Service of a subpoena.* Service of a subpoena will be effected:

(1) By personal service upon the person or agent of the person whose testimony is required or who is in charge of the documentary or physical evidence required; or

(2) By certified mail or delivery to the last known residence or business address of such person or agent; or

(3) Where personal service, mailing, or delivery has been unsuccessful, service may also be effected by publication in the **Federal Register**.

(e) *Witness fees.* Witnesses will be entitled to the same fees and mileage as are paid to witnesses in the courts of the United States.

(f) *Failure to obey a subpoena.* If a person disobeys a subpoena issued by the Director under the Act, the Attorney General, acting on behalf of the Director, may bring civil action in a district court of the United States to enforce the subpoena. The court may punish a failure to obey an order of the court to comply with the subpoena as a contempt of court.

**§ 270.316 Public hearings.**

(a) During the course of an investigation by a Team, if the Director considers it to be in the public interest, NIST may hold a public hearing for the purposes of gathering testimony from witnesses and informing the public on the progress of the investigation.

(b) Should NIST plan to hold a public hearing, NIST will publish a notice in the **Federal Register**, setting forth the date, time, and place of the hearing, and procedures for members of the public wishing to speak at the hearing. In addition, witnesses may be subpoenaed to provide testimony at a public hearing, in accordance with § 270.315 of this subpart.

(c) The Director, or his designee, will preside over any public hearing held pursuant to this section.

**Entry and Inspection**

**§ 270.320 Entry and inspection of site where a building failure has occurred.**

When the Director establishes and deploys a Team, the Team members will be issued notices of inspection authority

to enter and inspect the site where the building failure has occurred.

**§ 270.321 Entry and inspection of property where building components, materials, artifacts, and records with respect to a building failure are located.**

(a) In the course of an investigation, entry and inspection of property where building components, materials, artifacts and records with respect to a building failure are located normally will be conducted following the procedures described in §§ 270.322 through 270.325 of this subpart.

(b) Upon a written showing by the Lead Investigator of urgent and compelling reasons to believe that building components, materials, artifacts or records located on a particular property may be destroyed were the procedures described in §§ 270.322 through 270.324 of this subpart followed, the Director, with the concurrence of the General Counsel may immediately issue a notice of inspection authority for such property, pursuant to § 270.325 of this subpart.

**§ 270.322 Voluntary permission to enter and inspect property where building components, materials, artifacts, and records with respect to a building failure are located.**

After the Director establishes and deploys a Team, members of the public are encouraged to voluntarily permit Team members to enter property where building components, materials, artifacts, and records with respect to the building failure are located, and take action necessary, appropriate, and reasonable in light of the nature of the property to be inspected and to carry out the duties of the Team.

**§ 270.323 Requests for permission to enter and inspect property where building components, materials, artifacts, and records with respect to a building failure are located.**

(a) After the Director establishes and deploys a Team, the Lead Investigator or their designee may request permission to enter and inspect property where building components, materials, artifacts, and records with respect to a building failure are located, and take action necessary, appropriate, and reasonable in light of the nature of the property to be inspected and to carry out the duties of the Team.

(b) Requests for permission to enter and inspect such property will be made in writing and shall include:

(1) The name and title of the building owner, operator, or agent in charge of the building;

(2) If appropriate, the name of the building to be inspected;

(3) The address of the building to be inspected;

(4) The date and time of the inspection;

(5) If appropriate, a description of particular items to be inspected; and

(6) Contact information for the person to whom questions or problems regarding the request should be addressed.

**§ 270.324 Negotiations.**

The Lead Investigator may enter into discussions with appropriate parties to address problems identified with the goal of obtaining the permission requested pursuant to § 270.323 of this subpart.

**§ 270.325 Notice of authority to enter and inspect property where building components, materials, artifacts, and records with respect to a building failure are located.**

(a) *General.* In investigating a building failure pursuant to the Act, any member of a Team, or any other person authorized by the Director to support a Team, on display of written notice of inspection authority provided by the Director with concurrence of the General Counsel and appropriate credentials, may

(1) Enter property where a building failure being investigated has occurred, or where building components, materials, and artifacts with respect to the building failure are located, and take action necessary, appropriate, and reasonable in light of the nature of the property to be inspected and to carry out the duties of the Team;

(2) During reasonable hours, inspect any record (including any design, construction, or maintenance record), process, or facility related to the investigation;

(3) Inspect and test any building components, materials, and artifacts related to the building failure; and

(4) Move any record, component, material and artifact as provided by this part.

(b) *Conduct of inspection, test, or other action.* An inspection, test, or other action taken by a Team pursuant to section 4 of the Act will be conducted in a way that does not interfere unnecessarily with services provided by the owner or operator of the building components, materials, or artifacts, property, records, process, or facility, and to the maximum extent feasible, preserves evidence related to the building failure, consistent with the ongoing needs of the investigation.

(c) *Determination whether to issue a notice of inspection authority.* In determining whether to issue a notice of

inspection authority, the Director will consider whether the specific entry and inspection is reasonable and necessary for the Team to carry out its duties under the Act.

(d) *Notice of inspection authority.* Notice of inspection authority will be made in writing and shall include:

(1) A statement that the notice of inspection authority is issued pursuant to section 4 of the Act;

(2) The name and title of the building owner, operator, or agent in charge of the building;

(3) If appropriate, the name of the building to be inspected;

(4) The address of the building to be inspected;

(5) The date and time of the inspection;

(6) If appropriate, a description of particular items to be inspected; and

(7) The signature of the Director.

(e) *Refusal of entry on to property.* If upon being presented with a notice of inspection by any member of a Team, or any other person authorized by the Director, the owner, operator, or agent in charge of the building or property being inspected refuses to allow entry or inspection, the Director may seek the assistance of the Department of Justice to obtain a warrant or other authorized judicial order enabling entry on to the property.

**Preservation of Evidence**

**§ 270.330 Moving and preserving evidence.**

(a) A Team and NIST will take all necessary steps in moving and preserving evidence obtained during the course of an investigation under the Act to ensure that such evidence is preserved.

(b) In collecting and preserving evidence in the course of an investigation under the Act, a Team and NIST will:

(1) Maintain records to ensure that each piece of evidence is identified as to its source;

(2) Maintain and document an appropriate chain of custody for each piece of evidence;

(3) Use appropriate means to preserve each piece of evidence; and

(4) Ensure that each piece of evidence is kept in a suitably secure facility.

(c) If a Federal law enforcement agency suspects and notifies the Director that a building failure being investigated by a Team under the Act may have been caused by a criminal act, the Team, in consultation with the Federal law enforcement agency, will take necessary actions to ensure that evidence of the criminal act is preserved

and that the original evidence or copies, as appropriate, are turned over to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

### Information Created Pursuant to an Investigation

#### § 270.340 Information created by investigation participants who are not NIST employees.

Unless requested sooner by the Lead Investigator, at the conclusion of an investigation, each investigation participant who is not a NIST employee shall transfer any original information they created pursuant to the investigation to NIST. An investigation participant may retain a copy of the information for their records but may not use the information for purposes other than the investigation, nor may they release, reproduce, distribute, or publish any information first developed pursuant to the investigation, nor authorize others to do so, without the written permission of the Director or their designee. Pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 281a, no such information may be admitted or used as evidence in any suit or action for damages arising out of any matter related to the investigation.

### Protection of Information

#### § 270.350 Freedom of Information Act.

As permitted by section 7(b) of the Act, the following information will not be released:

(a) Information described by section 552(b) of Title 5, United States Code, or protected from disclosure by any other law of the United States; and

(b) Copies of evidence collected, information created, or other investigation documents submitted or received by NIST, a Team, or any other investigation participant, until the final investigation report is issued.

#### § 270.351 Protection of voluntarily submitted information.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a Team, NIST, any investigation participant, and any agency receiving information from a Team, NIST, or any other investigation participant, will not disclose voluntarily provided safety-related information if that information is not directly related to the building failure being investigated and the Director finds that the disclosure of the information would inhibit the voluntary provision of that type of information.

#### § 270.352 Public safety information.

A Team, NIST, and any other investigation participant will not publicly release any information it receives in the course of an investigation under the Act if the

Director finds that the disclosure might jeopardize public safety.

[FR Doc. 03-2084 Filed 1-29-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-13-P

## CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

### 16 CFR Part 1500

#### Exemptions From Classification as Banned Hazardous Substances; Exemption for Certain Model Rocket Propellant Devices for Use With Rocket-Powered Model Cars

**AGENCY:** Consumer Product Safety Commission.

**ACTION:** Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** The Commission is issuing a rule to exempt from the Federal Hazardous Substances Act ("FHSA") certain model rocket propellant devices for vehicles that travel on the ground. The Commission's current regulations exempt motors used for flyable model rockets. The rule exempts certain propellant devices for rocket-powered model cars if they meet requirements similar to those required for flyable model rockets and additional requirements to avoid possible injuries if the cars are operated off of their tether.

**DATES:** The rule becomes effective on January 30, 2003.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** James G. Joholske, Office of Compliance, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207; telephone (301) 504-0608 ext. 1419.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### A. Background

Section 2(q)(1)(A) of the FHSA bans toys that are or contain hazardous substances that are accessible to a child. 15 U.S.C. 1261(q)(1)(A). However, the FHSA authorizes the Commission, by regulation, to grant exemptions from classifications as banned hazardous substances for:

articles, such as chemistry sets, which by reason of their functional purpose require the inclusion of the hazardous substance involved, or necessarily present an electrical, mechanical, or thermal hazard, and which bear labeling giving adequate directions and warnings for safe use and are intended for use by children who have attained sufficient maturity, and may reasonably be expected to read and heed such directions and warnings.

15 U.S.C. 1261(q)(1)(A). Thus, the Commission may issue an exemption if it finds that the product requires inclusion of a hazardous substance in

order for it to function, has sufficient directions and warnings, and is intended for children who are old enough to read and follow the directions and warnings. *Id.* The Food and Drug Administration, which administered the FHSA before the Commission was established, issued a rule under this authority that exempted from the definition of banned hazardous substances model rocket propellant devices (motors) designed for use in light-weight, recoverable, and reflyable model rockets, if they meet certain requirements. 16 CFR 1500.85(a)(8).

##### B. The Petition

The Commission received a petition from Centuri Corporation ("Centuri") requesting that the Commission issue a rule exempting certain model rocket propellant devices to be used for model cars that travel on the ground along a tethered line and are propelled in a manner similar to flyable rockets. The petitioner requested an exemption that would allow the sale of both of its two prototype rocket-powered model cars. The smaller car, named "Blurzz," uses an "A" motor, and is shaped like a "rail," a type of custom-made vehicle used in competitive drag racing. The larger prototype, named "Screamin' Eagle," uses a "D" motor, and is shaped like a "Bonneville Speed Record" custom vehicle. The Commission decided to grant the petition in part and propose an exemption for model rocket propellant devices to be used for rocket-powered model cars like the smaller "Blurzz" car only.<sup>1</sup>

##### C. The Proposed Exemption

On January 30, 2002, the Commission published a notice of proposed rulemaking ("NPR") proposing to exempt model rocket propellant devices for use with smaller rocket-powered model cars like the "Blurzz." 67 FR 4373. As explained in the NPR, the Commission concluded that due to the weight, speed and the height it can reach, the larger "Screamin' Eagle" posed a significant risk of injury to any person downrange from it when it is used in the absence of the tether. The Commission, therefore, denied the petition insofar as it requested an exemption from the FHSA for model rocket propellant devices for cars like the "Screamin' Eagle." However, the Commission concluded that when the smaller "Blurzz" car was ignited

<sup>1</sup> The Commission voted 2-1 to grant the petition with regard to the smaller vehicles and deny it regarding the larger ones. Commissioners Thomas Moore and Mary Sheila Gall voted to take this action. Then-Chairman Ann Brown voted to deny the entire petition.