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Annette M. Sandberg,
Acting Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

49 CFR Part 393

[Docket No. FMCSA-1997-2213 (Formerly FHWA Docket No. MC-93-34)]

RIN 2126-AA12 (formerly RIN 2125-AD25)

Parts and Accessories Necessary for Safe Operation; Sleeper Berths on Motorcoaches; Withdrawal

AGENCY: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of withdrawal of proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY: The FMCSA withdraws its January 12, 1994 Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) relating to the use and design of driver sleeper berths used by the motorcoach industry. Due to other regulatory priorities and minimal interest by the industry concerning this issue, no further action was taken by the FMCSA after publication of the ANPRM. At this time FMCSA chooses not to establish potentially design-restrictive regulatory standards for the use of sleeper berths on motorcoaches without authoritative research to guide their development. Accordingly, the January 12, 1994 ANPRM regarding the use and design of motorcoach sleeper berths is withdrawn.

DATES: The advance notice of proposed rulemaking published on January 12, 1994, at 59 FR 1706 is withdrawn as of July 24, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Steinhoff, Chief, Commercial Passenger Carrier Safety Division, (202) 366-2174, Office of Bus and Truck Standards and Operations, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On January 12, 1994, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) (now FMCSA), issued an ANPRM requesting public comment on the use and design of driver sleeper berths used by the motorcoach industry (59 FR 1706). This action was taken in response to comments received in past years from the motorcoach industry, and ones offered specifically at a motorcoach

industry Zero-Base Review (an initiative in which the agency presumed that no prior regulations existed, and started drafting from a clean slate, or as if we had "zero" regulations). The hearing was held in Miami, Florida, on January 20, 1993. There was some concern among the industry that when the current sleeper berth regulations at 49 CFR 393.76 were promulgated, the differences in design and operation between motorcoaches and trucks may not have been considered by the agency.

The FHWA received nine comments to the docket in response to the ANPRM. The comments varied as to whether the regulations should be amended and whether the agency should prohibit the placement of a sleeper berth in the baggage area (under the passenger compartment) of a motorcoach. The current regulation prohibits placement of the sleeper berth in the cargo compartment. Some commenters believed that specific sleeper berth standards for motorcoaches would improve safety by improving the physical well-being of the driver and by providing an opportunity for a relief driver to get adequate rest.

Due to other regulatory priorities and a minimal interest by the industry concerning this issue, no further action was taken by the FMCSA after these comments were received.

Operationally, the motorcoach industry rarely uses sleeper berths, choosing to transport replacement drivers to rely points for the few non-stop trips that are longer than 500 miles in length. The vast majority of motorcoach trips are broken into segments where less than 10 hours of driving are required. Therefore, FMCSA believes there is no urgent safety need for the agency to initiate regulatory action on this matter.

The FMCSA believes there is presently no research on which to base the development of new, motorcoach-oriented sleeper berth specifications. The current requirement in § 393.76 sets forth the minimum specifications for sleeper berths, and these are far exceeded by the present-day truck manufacturers. While § 393.76 is geared more toward sleeper berth installations in the truck environment, the basic principles set forth for trucks could also be adhered to by motorcoach manufacturers. These principles include: a prohibition from placing the sleeper berth in the cargo compartment (in this case, the luggage compartment), a requirement for an exit from the sleeper berth into the driver's compartment (in this case, the passenger compartment, which also includes the driver's location), and provision for

occupant restraint meeting the spirit of paragraph (h) of § 393.76. When conducting roadside inspections and compliance reviews, FMCSA considers these principles in applying the language of § 393.76 to sleeper berths installed in motorcoaches.

At this time, the FMCSA chooses not to develop regulatory standards for the use of sleeper berths on motorcoaches without authoritative research to guide their development. This could result in design restrictive requirements. Rather, the agency intends to work with the motorcoach manufacturers, the motorcoach industry, and safety organizations, such as the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, to explore the development of a voluntary industry standard for motorcoach sleeper berth manufacture and maintenance. The FMCSA intends to work with these organizations to determine how the principles of § 393.76 apply to current and future motorcoach design and operations.

For these reasons, the January 12, 1994 ANPRM is withdrawn.

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Annette M. Sandberg,
Acting Administrator

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

49 CFR Part 393

[Docket No. FMCSA-1997-2278 (Formerly Docket No. MC-96-5)]

RIN 2126-AA19 (formerly RIN 2125-AD76)

Parts and Accessories Necessary for Safe Operation: Television Receivers and Data Display Units; Withdrawal

AGENCY: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of withdrawal of proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY: The FMCSA withdraws its April 3, 1996, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to rescind restrictions on the locations at which television receivers may be positioned within commercial motor vehicles (CMVs). After reviewing the public comments received in response to the NPRM, the agency no longer considers the restrictions to be obsolete and redundant. The agency believes that it is necessary to retain the rule to prohibit unsafe driver behavior, and that doing so is not likely to discourage the use of