

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1994 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 103-429 effective July 5, 1994, see section 9 of Pub. L. 103-429, set out as a note under section 321 of this title.

REGULATIONS

Pub. L. 103-272, §4(q), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 1371, provided that: "The revision of regulations, referred to in section 32705(b)(2)(A) of title 49, United States Code, as enacted by section 1 of this Act, that is required by section 7 of the Independent Safety Board Act Amendments of 1990 (Public Law 101-641, 104 Stat. 4657) [former 15 U.S.C. 1988(d)(1)(C), 1988 note] shall be prescribed not later than May 28, 1991."

§ 32706. Inspections, investigations, and records

(a) **AUTHORITY TO INSPECT AND INVESTIGATE.**—Subject to section 32707 of this title, the Secretary of Transportation may conduct an inspection or investigation necessary to carry out this chapter or a regulation prescribed or order issued under this chapter. The Secretary shall cooperate with State and local officials to the greatest extent possible in conducting an inspection or investigation. The Secretary may give the Attorney General information about a violation of this chapter or a regulation prescribed or order issued under this chapter.

(b) **ENTRY, INSPECTION, AND IMPOUNDMENT.**—(1) In carrying out subsection (a) of this section, an officer or employee designated by the Secretary, on display of proper credentials and written notice to the owner, operator, or agent in charge, may—

(A) enter and inspect commercial premises in which a motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment is manufactured, held for shipment or sale, maintained, or repaired;

(B) enter and inspect noncommercial premises in which the Secretary reasonably believes there is a motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment that is an object of a violation of this chapter;

(C) inspect that motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment; and

(D) impound for not more than 72 hours for inspection a motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment that the Secretary reasonably believes is an object of a violation of this chapter.

(2) An inspection or impoundment under this subsection shall be conducted at a reasonable time, in a reasonable way, and with reasonable promptness. The written notice may consist of a warrant issued under section 32707 of this title.

(c) **REASONABLE COMPENSATION.**—When the Secretary impounds for inspection a motor vehicle (except a vehicle subject to subchapter I of chapter 135 of this title) or motor vehicle equipment under subsection (b)(1)(D) of this section, the Secretary shall pay reasonable compensation to the owner of the vehicle or equipment if the inspection or impoundment results in denial of use, or reduction in value, of the vehicle or equipment.

(d) **RECORDS AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS.**—(1) To enable the Secretary to decide whether a dealer or distributor is complying with this chapter and regulations prescribed and orders issued under this chapter, the Secretary may require the dealer or distributor—

(A) to keep records;

(B) to provide information from those records if the Secretary states the purpose for requiring the information and identifies the information to the fullest extent practicable; and

(C) to allow an officer or employee designated by the Secretary to inspect relevant records of the dealer or distributor.

(2) This subsection and subsection (e)(1)(B) of this section do not authorize the Secretary to require a dealer or distributor to provide information on a regular periodic basis.

(e) **ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY AND CIVIL ACTIONS TO ENFORCE.**—(1) In carrying out this chapter, the Secretary may—

(A) inspect and copy records of any person at reasonable times;

(B) order a person to file written reports or answers to specific questions, including reports or answers under oath; and

(C) conduct hearings, administer oaths, take testimony, and require (by subpoena or otherwise) the appearance and testimony of witnesses and the production of records the Secretary considers advisable.

(2) A witness summoned under this subsection is entitled to the same fee and mileage the witness would have been paid in a court of the United States.

(3) A civil action to enforce a subpoena or order of the Secretary under this subsection may be brought in the United States district court for any judicial district in which the proceeding by the Secretary is conducted. The court may punish a failure to obey an order of the court to comply with the subpoena or order of the Secretary as a contempt of court.

(f) **PROHIBITIONS.**—A person may not fail to keep records, refuse access to or copying of records, fail to make reports or provide information, fail to allow entry or inspection, or fail to permit impoundment, as required under this section.

(Pub. L. 103-272, §1(e), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 1052; Pub. L. 103-429, §6(35), Oct. 31, 1994, 108 Stat. 4380; Pub. L. 105-102, §2(19), Nov. 20, 1997, 111 Stat. 2205.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

PUB. L. 103-272

Revised Section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
32706(a)	15:1990d(a)(1).	Oct. 20, 1972, Pub. L. 92-513, 86 Stat. 947, §§414(a)-(c), 416; added July 14, 1976, Pub. L. 94-364, §408(2), 90 Stat. 985, 988.
32706(b)	15:1990d(a)(2).	
32706(c)	15:1990d(a)(3).	
32706(d)	15:1990d(b).	
32706(e)(1) ..	15:1990d(c)(1)-(3).	
32706(e)(2) ..	15:1990d(c)(5).	
32706(e)(3) ..	15:1990d(c)(4).	
32706(f)	15:1990f.	

In subsection (a), the words "Subject to section 32707 of this title" are added for clarity. The words "appropriate" and "consistent with the purposes of this subsection" are omitted as surplus. The words "The Secretary may give the Attorney General information" are substituted for "Information obtained . . . may be referred to the Attorney General for investigative consideration" to eliminate unnecessary words.

In subsection (b)(1), before clause (A), the words “duly” and “stating their purpose and” are omitted as surplus. In clause (A), the words “any factory, warehouse, establishment, or other” are omitted as surplus.

In subsection (b)(2), the words “shall be commenced and completed” are omitted as surplus. The words “a warrant issued under section 32707 of this title” are substituted for “an administrative inspection warrant” for clarity.

In subsection (c), the words “the authority of” and “any item of” are omitted as surplus.

In subsection (d)(1), before clause (A), the words “the Secretary may require” are substituted for “as the Secretary may reasonably require” and “as the Secretary finds necessary” to eliminate unnecessary words. In clause (B), the words “such officer or employee” and “reason or” are omitted as surplus. In clause (C), the words “duly” and “upon request of such officer or employee” are omitted as surplus.

In subsection (d)(2), the words “and subsection (e)(1)(B) of this section” are added for clarity.

In subsection (e)(1), before clause (A), the words “In carrying out this chapter” are substituted for “For the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this subchapter”, “In order to carry out the provisions of this subchapter”, “relevant to any function of the Secretary under this subchapter”, and “relating to any function of the Secretary under this subchapter” for consistency. The words “or, with the authorization of the Secretary, any officer or employee of the Department of Transportation” and “or his duly authorized agent” are omitted as surplus because of 49:322(b). In clause (A), the words “inspect and copy” are substituted for “have access to, and for the purposes of examination the right to copy” to eliminate unnecessary words. The word “records” is substituted for “documentary evidence” for consistency. The words “having materials or information” are omitted as surplus. In clause (B), the word “order” is substituted for “require, by general or special orders” to eliminate unnecessary words. The words “in such form as the Secretary may prescribe” and “shall be filed with the Secretary within such reasonable period as the Secretary may prescribe” are omitted as surplus because of 49:322(a). In clause (C), the words “sit and act at such times and places” are omitted as being included in “conduct hearings”.

In subsection (e)(3), the words “A civil action to enforce a subpoena or order of the Secretary under this subsection may be brought in the United States district court for the judicial district in which the proceeding by the Secretary was conducted” are substituted for 15:1990d(c)(4) (words before last comma) for consistency in the revised title and to eliminate unnecessary words.

PUB. L. 103-429

This amends 49:32706(e)(3) to clarify the restatement of 15:1990d(c)(4) by section 1 of the Act of July 5, 1994 (Public Law 103-272, 108 Stat. 1053).

PUB. L. 105-102

This amends 49:32706(c) to correct a cross-reference necessary because of the restatement of subtitle IV of title 49 by the ICC Termination Act (Public Law 104-88, 109 Stat. 803).

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

1997—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 105-102 substituted “subchapter I of chapter 135” for “subchapter II of chapter 105”.

1994—Subsec. (e)(3). Pub. L. 103-429 substituted “any judicial district in which the proceeding by the Secretary is conducted.” for “the judicial district in which the proceeding by the Secretary was conducted.”

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1994 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 103-429 effective July 5, 1994, see section 9 of Pub. L. 103-429, set out as a note under section 321 of this title.

§ 32707. Administrative warrants

(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, “probable cause” means a valid public interest in the effective enforcement of this chapter or a regulation prescribed under this chapter sufficient to justify the inspection or impoundment in the circumstances stated in an application for a warrant under this section.

(b) WARRANT REQUIREMENT AND ISSUANCE.—(1) Except as provided in paragraph (4) of this subsection, an inspection or impoundment under section 32706 of this title may be carried out only after a warrant is obtained.

(2) A judge of a court of the United States or a State court of record or a United States magistrate may issue a warrant for an inspection or impoundment under section 32706 of this title within the territorial jurisdiction of the court or magistrate. The warrant must be based on an affidavit that—

(A) establishes probable cause to issue the warrant; and

(B) is sworn to before the judge or magistrate by an officer or employee who knows the facts alleged in the affidavit.

(3) The judge or magistrate shall issue the warrant when the judge or magistrate decides there is a reasonable basis for believing that probable cause exists to issue the warrant. The warrant must—

(A) identify the premises, property, or motor vehicle to be inspected and the items or type of property to be impounded;

(B) state the purpose of the inspection, the basis for issuing the warrant, and the name of the affiant;

(C) direct an individual authorized under section 32706 of this title to inspect the premises, property, or vehicle for the purpose stated in the warrant and, when appropriate, to impound the property specified in the warrant;

(D) direct that the warrant be served during the hours specified in the warrant; and

(E) name the judge or magistrate with whom proof of service is to be filed.

(4) A warrant under this section is not required when—

(A) the owner, operator, or agent in charge of the premises consents;

(B) it is reasonable to believe that the mobility of the motor vehicle to be inspected makes it impractical to obtain a warrant;

(C) an application for a warrant cannot be made because of an emergency;

(D) records are to be inspected and copied under section 32706(e)(1)(A) of this title; or

(E) a warrant is not constitutionally required.

(c) SERVICE AND IMPOUNDMENT OF PROPERTY.—(1) A warrant issued under this section must be served and proof of service filed not later than 10 days after its issuance date. The judge or magistrate may allow additional time in the war-