

instruction manual to determine where to properly place and how to properly secure child safety seats.

NHTSA has published numerous other brochures on how to safely transport children. They describe other important vehicle-to-CSS interface issues and factors that need to be considered by parents and caregivers. The brochures are available on our NHTSA website⁵ or can be obtained by contacting the NHTSA Hotline.⁶

NHTSA agrees that the design of the lap belt assembly for the center seating position in the subject vehicles may make it difficult for CSSs similar to the Cosco Touriva to be installed securely and that children riding in an inadequately-secured CSS might not be properly protected in the event of a crash. However, these CSSs can be installed securely in the outboard passenger seating position as described in the vehicle owner's manual. (We note that the subject vehicles, when equipped with the optional passenger air bag, are equipped with switches that allow the driver to temporarily disable the passenger air bag when a child is present to assure that a deploying air bag will not injure the child.) In addition, there have been no consumer complaints regarding this alleged problem in the subject vehicles. For these reasons, NHTSA has no basis on which to conclude that this condition constitutes a safety-related defect. It is unlikely that NHTSA would issue an order concerning the notification and remedy of a safety-related defect at the conclusion of an investigation into this matter.

With respect to the petitioner's request that a rulemaking be commenced to consider prohibiting this type of lap belt assembly from being used in any passenger motor vehicles in the future due to its inability to securely hold certain models/sizes of CSSs, NHTSA has recently amended Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 213 and adopted a new FMVSS No. 225 to establish new anchorage and mounting requirements for vehicles and CSSs. FMVSS No. 225 was adopted in March 1999 and, when fully effective, will require passenger cars, SUVs, light-duty trucks, buses, and vans to be equipped with easy-to-use anchorage systems consisting of an upper tether anchorage and two lower anchorages designed to be used exclusively for securing CSSs. By requiring an independent child restraint anchorage

system, this standard will significantly improve the compatibility of vehicle seats and CSSs. As of September 1, 2000, 80% of new vehicles were required to be equipped with the user-friendly upper tether anchorages and by September 1, 2001, 80% of new vehicles will also be equipped with the lower restraint anchorages. All passenger cars manufactured after September 1, 2002, will be equipped with both the upper tether and lower restraint anchorages. All CSSs manufactured after September 1, 2002 will be required to have hardware to attach to these standardized anchorages, and will also be required to be attachable to the vehicle via the vehicle's seat belt system, as is currently done, since the pre-existing fleet will not have the new anchorages. We note, however, that FMVSS No. 225 only requires the new, standardized anchorages at certain seating positions, which vary depending on the type of vehicle, so it is crucial that consumers consult their vehicle owner's manual and their child restraint instruction manual to determine where and how to properly install their CSS. In view of these recent amendments, the compatibility problems noted by the petitioner will not occur in future vehicles, so there is no need for further regulatory action.

For the foregoing reasons, and in view of the need to allocate and prioritize NHTSA's limited resources to best accomplish the agency's safety mission, the petition for a defect investigation and for rulemaking is denied.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 30162(d); delegations of authority at CFR 1.50 and 501.8.

Issued on: May 8, 2001.

Stephen R. Kratzke,
Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

Kenneth N. Weinstein,
Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Advisory Council on Transportation Statistics

AGENCY: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Transportation.

ACTION: Notice of Meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to Section 10(A)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Public law 72-363; 5 U.S.C. App.2) notice is hereby given of a meeting of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics

(BTS) Advisory Council on Transportation Statistics (ACTS) to be held Friday, June 1, 2001, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The meeting will take place at the U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC, in conference room 3200-3202 of the Nassif Building.

The Advisory Council, called for under Section 6007 of Public law 102-240, Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, December 18, 1991, and chartered on June 19, 1995, was created to advise the Director of BTS on transportation statistics and analyses, including whether or not the statistics and analysis disseminated by the Bureau are of high quality and are based upon the best available objective information.

The agenda for this meeting will include, Director's programs update, indicators, outreach, performance measures, confidentiality, identification of substantive issues, review of plans and schedule, other items of interest, discussion and agreement of date(s) for subsequent meetings, and comments from the floor.

Since access to the DOT building is controlled, all persons who plan to attend the meeting must notify Ms. Lillian "Pidge" Chapman, Council Liaison, on (202) 366-1270 prior to May 25, 2001. Attendance is open to the interested public but limited to space available. With the approval of the Chair, members of the public may present oral statements at the meeting. Noncommittee members wishing to present oral statements, obtain information, or who plan to access the building to attend the meeting should also contact Ms. Chapman.

Members of the public may present a written statement to the Council at any time.

Persons with a disability requiring special services, such as an interpreter for the hearing impaired, should contact Ms. Chapman (202) 366-1270 at least seven days prior to the meeting.

Issued in Washington, DC, on May 8, 2001.

Ashish Sen,
Director.

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⁵ NHTSA Website at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/childps/>.

⁶ NHTSA Hotline at 1-888-DASH-2-DOT (1-888-327-4236).