

15000 Aviation Blvd., Lawndale, CA 90261.

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**Ellsworth L. Chan,**

*Acting Manager, Airports Division, Western-Pacific Region.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Highway Administration

#### Intelligent Transportation Society of America; Public Meeting

**AGENCY:** Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of Public Meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITS AMERICA) will hold a meeting of its Coordinating Council on Sunday, June 3, 2001. The meeting begins at 1:30 p.m. The letter designations that follow each item mean the following: (I) is an information item; (A) is an action item; (D) is a discussion item. The General Session includes the following items: (1) Housekeeping items—introductions, antitrust, previous minutes, etc.; (2) Federal Report (I/D); (3) President's Report (I/D); (4) 10-Year Program Plan & Research Agenda Update (I/D); (5) Break; (6) 511 Update (I/D); (7) Driver Focus Update (I/D); (8) Expedited Standards Update (I/D); (9) Closing Housekeeping—next meeting dates/locations, adjourn.

ITS AMERICA provides a forum for national discussion and recommendations on ITS activities including programs, research needs, strategic planning, standards, international liaison, and priorities.

The charter for the utilization of ITS AMERICA establishes this organization as an advisory committee under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) 5 U.S.C. app. 2, when it provides advice or recommendations to DOT officials on ITS policies and programs. (56 FR 9400, March 6, 1991).

**DATES:** The Coordinating Council of ITS AMERICA will meet on Sunday, June 3, 2001 from 1:30 p.m.—4 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** Fontainebleau Hilton Resort, 4441 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, Florida 33140. Phone: (305) 538-2000.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Materials associated with this meeting may be examined at the offices of ITS AMERICA, 400 Virginia Avenue SW., Suite 800, Washington, DC 20024. Persons needing further information or who request to speak at this meeting

should contact Debbie M. Busch at ITS AMERICA by telephone at (202) 484-2904 or by FAX at (202) 484-3483. The DOT contact is Kristy Frizzell, FHWA, HOIT, Washington, DC 20590, (202) 366-9536. Office hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except for legal holidays. (23 U.S.C. 315; 49 CFR 1.48)

Issued on: May 10, 2001.

**Jeffrey Paniati,**

*Program Manager, ITS Joint Program Office.*

[FR Doc. 01-12171 Filed 5-14-01; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket NHTSA-99-5087]

#### Safety Performance Standards Program Meeting

**AGENCY:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (DOT).

**ACTION:** Notice of NHTSA rulemaking status meeting.

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces a public meeting at which NHTSA will answer questions from the public and the automobile industry regarding the agency's vehicle regulatory program.

**DATES:** The Agency's regular public meeting relating to its vehicle regulatory program will be held on Thursday, July 26, 2001, beginning at 9:45 a.m. and ending at approximately 12 p.m. at the BWI Airport Marriott Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland. Questions relating to the vehicle regulatory program must be submitted in writing with a diskette (Microsoft Word) by Monday, July 2, 2001, to the address shown below or by e-mail. If sufficient time is available, questions received after July 2, may be answered at the meeting. The individual, group or company submitting a question(s) does not have to be present for the question(s) to be answered. A consolidated list of the questions submitted by July 2, 2001, and the issues to be discussed, will be posted on NHTSA's web site ([www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)) by Monday, July 23, 2001, and also will be available at the meeting. The agency will hold a second public meeting on July 26, devoted exclusively to a presentation of research and development programs. This meeting will begin at 1:30 p.m. and end at approximately 5 p.m. This meeting is described more fully in a separate announcement. The next NHTSA Public Meeting will take place on Thursday, November 15, 2001, at the

Best Western Gateway International Hotel, Romulus, Michigan.

**ADDRESSES:** Questions for the July 26, NHTSA Rulemaking Status Meeting, relating to the agency's vehicle regulatory program, should be submitted to Delia Lopez, NPS-01, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590, Fax Number 202-366-4329, e-mail [dlopez@nhtsa.dot.gov](mailto:dlopez@nhtsa.dot.gov). The meeting will be held at the BWI Airport Marriott Hotel, 1743 West Nursery Road, Baltimore, MD 21240. The telephone number for the BWI Airport Marriott Hotel is 410-859-8300.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Delia Lopez, (202) 366-1810.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NHTSA holds regular public meetings to answer questions from the public and the regulated industries regarding the agency's vehicle regulatory program. Questions on aspects of the agency's research and development activities that relate directly to ongoing regulatory actions should be submitted, as in the past, to the agency's Safety Performance Standards Office. Transcripts of these meetings will be available for public inspection in the DOT Docket in Washington, DC, within four weeks after the meeting. Copies of the transcript will then be available at ten cents a page, (length has varied from 80 to 150 pages) upon request to DOT Docket, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. The DOT Docket is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The transcript may also be accessed electronically at <http://dms.dot.gov>, at docket NHTSA-99-5087. Questions to be answered at the public meeting should be organized by categories to help us process the questions into an agenda form more efficiently.

#### Sample Format

- I. Rulemaking
  - A. Crash avoidance
  - B. Crashworthiness
  - C. Other Rulemakings
- II. Consumer Information
- III. Miscellaneous

NHTSA will provide auxiliary aids to participants as necessary. Any person desiring assistance of "auxiliary aids" (e.g., sign-language interpreter, telecommunications devices for deaf persons (TDDs), readers, taped texts, brailled materials, or large print materials and/or a magnifying device), please contact Delia Lopez on (202) 366-1810, by COB Monday, July 23, 2001.

Issued: May 8, 2001.

**Stephen R. Kratzke,**

*Associate Administrator for Safety  
Performance Standards.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

#### Denial of a Petition for a Defect Investigation and for Rulemaking, DP00-005

**AGENCY:** National Highway Traffic  
Safety Administration (NHTSA),  
Department of Transportation.

**ACTION:** Denial of petition for a defect  
investigation and for rulemaking.

**SUMMARY:** This notice sets forth the  
reasons for the denial of a petition  
submitted to NHTSA under 49 U.S.C.  
30162, requesting that the agency  
investigate an alleged safety-related  
defect in certain Ford pickup trucks and  
to begin a rulemaking proceeding. The  
petition is hereinafter identified as  
DP00-005.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For  
defects issues, Peter C. Ong, Office of  
Defects Investigation, NHTSA, 400  
Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC  
20590. Telephone: (202) 366-0583. For  
rulemaking issues, Michael Huntley,  
Office of Safety Performance Standards,  
Telephone: (202) 366-0029.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Dr. Carl E.  
Nash (petitioner) submitted a petition to  
NHTSA by letter dated September 1,  
2000, requesting, among other things,  
that a safety-related defect investigation  
be initiated with respect to the  
interaction of a vehicle seat belt in the  
model year (MY) 1997 Ford Ranger  
pickup truck and certain child safety  
seats (CSS). Specifically, the petitioner  
alleges that the 2-point, manually-  
adjusting lap belt design located in the  
center seating position of the MY 1997  
Ford Ranger is defective because it does  
not securely hold certain forward-facing  
CSSs, such as the 1997 Cosco Touriva.  
Since both the MY 1996 and 1997 Ford  
Rangers have the same lap belt design  
in the center seating position, they will  
be the subject vehicles in this phase of  
the analysis. Additionally, the petitioner  
requests that a rulemaking be  
considered to prohibit this type of lap  
belt assembly from being used in any  
passenger vehicles in the future.

A review of the agency's data files,  
including information reported to the  
DOT Auto Safety Hotline, does not  
indicate any complaints about the lap

belt for the center seat on the subject  
vehicles, including when that belt is  
used with a CSS. Also, a review of the  
data for complaints about the Cosco  
Touriva CSSs showed no complaints  
referring to CSS attachment or  
installation problems when used in the  
subject vehicles, or in any other  
vehicles.

The subject vehicles have a 3-point  
combination lap and shoulder belt  
assembly and an air bags at the driver  
and outboard passenger seating  
positions, and a manually-adjusting lap  
belt assembly at the center seating  
position. The outboard passenger seat  
belt assembly has a dual locking mode  
belt retractor to help maintain belt  
tension for both the occupants and a  
CSS. The lap belt assembly for the  
center seating position has a built-in  
friction locking bar inside the latch  
plate assembly to keep the belt tight, but  
no retractor.

Instructions are given in the subject  
vehicles' owner's guides,<sup>1</sup> describing  
how to install a CSS in a seating  
position with a combination lap and  
shoulder belt, which is the outboard  
seating position. According to those  
instructions, the seat belt assembly is to  
be engaged in the automatic locking  
mode to ensure that the seat belt  
remains tight when used to restrain a  
CSS. The instructions also recommend  
the use of a top tether strap with  
forward-facing CSSs. The guide also  
states that when using a rear-facing  
infant CSS, the passenger air bag must  
be turned off. No instructions are given  
for the installation of a CSS in the center  
seating position, although there is no  
specific direction not to do so.

ODI personnel easily installed and  
secured a Cosco Touriva CSS in the  
outboard passenger seating position of a  
subject vehicle following the  
instructions provided in the vehicle's  
owner's guide. It was difficult to install  
the Touriva CSS in the center seating  
position because the base of the CSS  
was wider than the distance between  
the seat belt latch plate assembly exit  
point and the buckle assembly exit  
point in the bench seat. ODI also  
observed that when the latch plate end  
was inserted into the buckle, the buckle  
portion of the lap belt assembly  
protruded 5-6 inches out from the seat  
and was about the same height as the  
height of the slot in the CSS for the seat  
belt to pass through.

ODI personnel then checked the CSS  
for tightness as prescribed in the

Touriva instruction manual:<sup>2</sup> "Tilt and  
push the child restraint forward and to  
both sides." The CSS moved and  
loosened from the lap belt when it was  
tilted in the side to side direction. It  
appeared that the belt webbing could  
form a 90° angle to the latch plate  
assembly and prevent the engagement of  
the friction locking bar in the belt  
assembly of the vehicle. This inability of  
the Touriva CSS to remain tightly  
secured on the center seat was evident.

ODI personnel also installed another  
forward-facing CSS, the Gerry One-Click  
Model 691, in a subject vehicle. Again,  
ODI personnel easily installed and  
secured the One-Click CSS in the  
outboard passenger seating position.  
Due to its narrower base, it was also  
easier to install and secure in the center  
seating position than the Cosco Touriva  
CSS. In the final check for proper fit/  
tightness, the One-Click was "rocked  
from side to side" as instructed in the  
One-Click instruction manual,<sup>3</sup> and it  
remained tight and secured to the center  
seat.

It was noted that even if the Cosco  
Touriva CSS could have been securely  
attached at the center seating position,  
its left side intruded into the driver's  
seating area, and therefore could  
interfere with the driver's ability to  
operate the vehicle. In addition, the  
driver would not be able to readily  
operate the floor-mounted shift lever  
because it would be blocked by the left-  
front corner of the CSS (approximately  
60% of the subject vehicles were sold  
with a floor-mounted shift lever).

Proper interaction and fit between a  
vehicle and a CSS are very important.  
NHTSA's child passenger safety  
brochures advise parents and caregivers  
that "Not all child seats can be installed  
in all vehicles and all seating positions.  
With numerous models of child seats,  
almost 300 models of passenger  
vehicles, and the wide range of belt  
systems available today, correctly  
installing a child seat can be  
challenging." These brochures also  
caution owners that "Vehicle seats and  
seat belts are built for the comfort of  
adults, not to secure a child car seat  
correctly. Some child car seats cannot  
be used safely in certain seating  
positions."<sup>4</sup> It is, therefore, imperative  
that consumers check their vehicle  
owner's manual and child restraint

<sup>2</sup> Cosco Touriva One-Guard models 02-014/02-015, Instruction Manual for a MY 1997 CSS, Page 7, Sections "Do You Have a Manual Belt?"

<sup>3</sup> Evenflo/Gerry One-Click Model 691 CSS Owner's Manual, Page 11, Section "Manually Adjusted Belt and Locking Latch Plates."

<sup>4</sup> NHTSA Publications DOT HS 809 011, "Buying a Safer Car for Child Passengers 2000," and DOT HS 808 302, "Are You Using It Right?"

<sup>1</sup> E.g., MY 1997 Ford Ranger Owner's Guide, First Printing, Pages 101-145 and MY 1996 Ford Ranger Owner's Guide, First Printing, Pages 9-40.