

this section shall be in containers plainly marked "inedible".

Any person wishing to submit written data, views, or arguments concerning the proposed amendment may do so by filing them, in duplicate, with the Hearing Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250, or if the material is deemed to be confidential, with the Inspection Standards and Regulations Staff, Scientific and Technical Services, Meat and Poultry Inspection Program, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250, by January 12, 1976.

Any person desiring opportunity for oral presentation of views should address such request to the Staff identified in the preceding paragraph, so that arrangements may be made for such views to be presented prior to the date specified in the preceding paragraph. A record will be made of all views orally presented.

All written submissions and records of oral views made pursuant to this notice will be made available for public inspection in the Office of the Hearing Clerk during regular hours of business, unless the person makes the submission to the Staff identified in the preceding paragraph and requests that it be held confidential. A determination will be made whether a proper showing in support of the request has been made on grounds that its disclosure could adversely affect any person by disclosing information in the nature of trade secrets or commercial or financial information obtained from any person and privileged or confidential. If it is determined that a proper showing has been made in support of the request, the material will be held confidential; otherwise, notice will be given of denial of such request and an opportunity afforded for withdrawal of the submission. Requests for confidential treatment will be held confidential (7 CFR 1.27(c)).

Comments on the proposal should bear a reference to the date and page number of this issue of the FEDERAL REGISTER.

Done at Washington, D.C., on: November 6, 1975.

F. J. MULHERN,
Administrator, Animal and
Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 75-30659 Filed 11-12-75; 8:45 am]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Materials Transportation Bureau

[49 CFR Part 192]

[Docket No. OPSO-36, Notice No. 75-6]

TRANSPORTATION OF NATURAL AND OTHER GAS BY PIPELINE

Caulked Bell and Spigot Joints

The Office of Pipeline Safety Operations (OPSO) is considering a revision of § 192.753(a) to permit cast iron caulked bell and spigot joints subject to pressures of 25 psig or more to be sealed by any means which maintains flexibility in the joint, bonds chemically or mechani-

cally with cast iron, and satisfies the general requirements of §§ 192.53 and 192.143 applicable to the materials and the design of pipeline components.

Currently, § 192.753(a) requires that cast iron caulked bell and spigot joints subject to pressures of 25 psig or more must be sealed with mechanical leak clamps. This requirement is based on the recommended safety practice contained in the United States of America Standards Institute B31.8 Code, 1968 edition, which was widely used by the pipeline industry before Part 192 was adopted (35 FR 13248, August 19, 1970).

The need for the additional seal by mechanical leak clamps is indicated by both the gas pressure and the drying effect of natural gas on caulked bell and spigot joints. When most of the cast iron bell and spigot joints being used in the transportation of natural gas in the U.S. were installed, they were caulked with a jute packing material to prevent the escape of gas. The jute caulking, which must be kept moist with oil or water to remain gas tight, provided a satisfactory seal for the manufactured gases that were transported when the joints were installed. However, when joints caulked with jute are used in the transportation of natural gas, which is not as moist as manufactured gas, the jute caulking soon dries out, causing gas leaks. In addition, until recently, mechanical leak clamps were the only reliable means of sealing a cast iron caulked bell and spigot joint subject to pressures of 25 psig or more to prevent it from leaking.

Since Part 192 was adopted, the pipeline industry has developed new methods and materials for sealing cast iron bell and spigot joints. OPSO believes that at least one recently developed method can be used to seal a caulked joint subject to pressures of 25 psig or more as well as or better than a mechanical leak clamp. Other new methods may also provide a satisfactory alternative to mechanical leak clamps, and their use should not be precluded by Part 192.

The new method which results in the chemical bonding of a rubber compound to the surfaces of a bell and spigot joint, permanently sealing the joint to prevent the escape of gas, was developed by a British chemical firm, Avon Lipplatt Hobbs, Ltd., in consultation with the British Gas Council and the Dutch Gas Institute. This new method is popularly known as the Avonseal method. In Great Britain the method has been used to seal over 300,000 joints, many of which are operated at pressures well in excess of 25 psig. The first 100,000 of the seals installed in Great Britain were recorded and checked by the British Gas Council. Only 17 leaks occurred on the 100,000 joints, and upon investigation, each of these leaks was found to be due to human error with no failure in material. In view of this development, by letter dated July 8, 1974, the Miller Pipeline Corporation petitioned OPSO to amend § 192.753(a) to permit the use of this new method as an alternative to mechanical leak clamps.

The Ohio Public Utilities Commission (PUC) also believes that § 192.753(a) should not restrict the use of new methods as safe as mechanical leak clamps. On June 5, 1975, acting under Section 3(e) of the Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act of 1968 (49 U.S.C. 1674(a)), the PUC granted a waiver from the requirements of § 192.753(a) to three Ohio gas companies permitting them to use the Avonseal method on cast iron caulked bell and spigot mains operating below 50 psig. The record of this State waiver and the OPSO action entering no objection to it are contained in OPSO Docket No. OH-75-1.

OPSO has reviewed the tests and data supporting the safety of the Avonseal method submitted by the Ohio PUC and the Miller Pipeline Corporation along with information relevant to the use of other sealing methods. On the basis of that review, OPSO has developed criteria which it believes any sealing method subject to pressures of 25 psig or more should meet if the method is to provide a safe alternative to mechanical leak clamps. These criteria are (1) maintenance of flexibility in the joint to minimize stresses at the joint that could cause pipe breakage, (2) a chemical or mechanical bond between the sealing material and the metal surfaces of both the pipe bell and spigot to provide a permanent seal, and (3) the sealing material and the bond must have a strength sufficient to withstand anticipated forces, be resistant to adverse environmental conditions, and be chemically compatible with materials to which the joint may be exposed. (The criteria in clause (3) are based on requirements now applicable to pipeline materials and components under §§ 192.53(a), (b) and 192.143.) OPSO believes that revising § 192.753(a) to permit the use of sealing methods which meet these criteria would have the benefit of removing the existing restriction against the use of technological advances, while maintaining the level of safety now provided.

In consideration of the foregoing, § 192.753(a) would be revised to read as follows:

§ 192.753 Caulked bell and spigot joints.

(a) Each cast iron caulked bell and spigot joint that is subject to pressures of 25 psig or more must be sealed with—

- (1) Mechanical leak clamps; or
- (2) A means which—
 - (i) Does not reduce the flexibility of the joint;
 - (ii) Permanently bonds, either chemically or mechanically, or both, a sealing material with the bell and spigot metal surfaces; and
 - (iii) Utilizes a sealing material and bond that meet the strength, environmental, and chemical compatibility requirements of §§ 192.53(a) and (b) and 192.143.

Interested persons are invited to participate in this rule making action by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications should identify the regulatory

docket and notice numbers and be submitted in duplicate to the Director, Office of Pipeline Safety Operations, Department of Transportation, Washington, D.C. 20590. All communications received by December 29, 1975, will be considered by the Director before taking final action on the notice. Late filed comments will be considered to the extent practicable. All comments will be available for examination by interested persons at the Office of Pipeline Safety Operations, Room 6226, 2100 Second Street, S.W., Washington, D.C., before and after the closing date for comments. The proposal contained in this notice may be changed in the light of comments received.

This notice is issued under the authority of section 3 of the Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act of 1968 (49 USC 1672), § 1.64 of the regulations of the Office of the Secretary of Transportation (49 CFR 1.64), and the redelegation of authority to the Director, Office of Pipeline Safety Operations, set forth in Appendix A to Part 102 of the regulations of the Office of the Director, Materials Transportation Bureau (49 CFR Part 102).

Issued in Washington, D.C., on November 7, 1975.

CESAR DELEON,
Acting Director, Office of
Pipeline Safety Operations.

[FR Doc.75-30673 Filed 11-12-75; 8:45 am]

**National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration**

[49 CFR Part 571]

[Docket No. 75-16: Notice 03]

BUS AIR BRAKE SYSTEMS

Amendment of Standard No. 121

This notice proposes an amendment of Standard No. 121, *Air Brake Systems*, 49 CFR 571.121, to suspend until January 1, 1977, the service brake stopping distance requirements as they apply to buses. This modification of the standard is responsive to information developed at a public meeting held in Washington, D.C., on October 29, 30, and 31, 1975, as well as other information collected by the NHTSA on field experience since the standard's implementation. A separate response will address the issues raised with regard to the standard's implementation in trucks and trailers.

The NHTSA called the public meeting (40 FR 43049, September 18, 1975) to collect all existing information as soon as possible on the operation of the new brake systems built to conform to the standard (a transcript of the meeting is available in the NHTSA public docket). But performance was reviewed by manufacturers and users of transit and intercity buses, and by Rockwell International Corporation, the manufacturer of virtually all axles and antilock components installed in these vehicles. The California Highway Patrol also submitted reports on antilock performance in California transit operations. Submitted informa-

tion confirmed a pattern of erratic behavior of bus antilock equipment that had begun to appear in other data received by the NHTSA.

The American Public Transit Association (APTA) submitted a report that summarizes the experience of 30 transit systems, including those that addressed the public meeting. The report revealed symptomatic defects in the installed antilock systems which have resulted in erratic braking performance of the new buses. The Maryland Mass Transit Administration, summarizing the views of other transit operators, called for a temporary cancellation of the standard. Additionally, the speakers asked for reevaluation of the standard as it applies to transit buses.

Intercity bus operators were represented by the National Association of Motor Bus Owners, Greyhound Corporation, and the manufacturers of a majority of intercity buses, Motor Coach Industries (MCI) and General Motors Corporation. MCI called for a 1-year suspension of the "no-lockup" requirement for buses, to be followed by the introduction of new requirements for buses different from those specified for trucks.

The NHTSA has studied the materials and arguments submitted by each speaker, along with the other material collected on experience with the 121 systems in buses. The agency has arrived at the following tentative findings:

(1) Manufacturers of both transit and intercity buses do not appear prepared at this time to utilize antilock systems other than those manufactured by Rockwell International Corporation.

(2) The Rockwell antilock system currently available for bus application is characterized by malfunction that warrants its deactivation on all vehicles on which it is installed while a correction is fully developed.

(3) Information furnished by Rockwell does not provide a basis to conclude that a demonstrably satisfactory correction to its antilock system defects is at hand.

(4) A situation wherein purchasers of new buses are required to pay for antilock systems which are to remain deactivated for an indefinite period is inappropriate.

In view of these findings, the NHTSA tentatively concludes that a 1-year suspension of parts of the standard for buses is in order. Accordingly, it is proposed that the section that requires vehicles to stop within a specific distance without wheel lockup (§5.3.1) be suspended for buses until January 1, 1977.

The efficacy of a 1-year suspension depends on the success of the fleet testing undertaken by Rockwell and any other manufacturers, such as the AC Division of General Motors, that are entering the bus antilock field. Additionally, the cooperation of bus users, both intercity and transit operators, will be required for successful evaluation of revised systems. Based on comments at the meeting, all parties intend to participate

actively and the NHTSA solicits comment on manufacturer and user plans to use the 1-year suspension of §5.3.1 to achieve maximum field evaluation. If justified, a public meeting on implementation of Standard No. 121 in buses could be called in the latter part of 1976 to evaluate data generated.

§ 571.121 [Amended]

In consideration of the foregoing, it is proposed that §5.3.1 of Standard No. 121 (49 CFR 571.121) be amended by the addition of the words: "Except for a bus manufactured before January 1, 1977, and" at the beginning of the first sentence.

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the proposal. Comments should refer to the docket number and be submitted to: Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5108, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. It is requested but not required that 10 copies be submitted.

All comments received before the close of business on the comment closing date indicated below will be considered, and will be available for examination in the docket at the above address both before and after that date. To the extent possible, comments filed after the closing date will also be considered. However, the rulemaking action may proceed at any time after that date, and comments received after the closing date and too late for consideration in regard to the action will be treated as suggestions for future rulemaking. The NHTSA will continue to file relevant material as it becomes available in the docket after the closing date, and it is recommended that interested persons continue to examine the docket for new material.

Comment closing date: December 15, 1975.

Proposed effective date: Date of publication of the final rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(Sec. 103, 119, Pub. L. 89-563, 80 Stat. 718 (15 U.S.C. 1392, 1407); delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.51 and 49 CFR 501.8.)

Issued on November 11, 1975.

ROBERT L. CARTER,
Associate Administrator,
Motor Vehicle Programs.

[FR Doc.75-30680 Filed 11-11-75; 9:31 am]

**CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY
COMMISSION**

[16 CFR Part 1207]

SWIMMING POOL SLIDES

Proposed Safety Standard; Correction

In FR Doc. 75-29501, published October 31, 1975 (40 FR 50728), the following correction is necessary:

The top line of Table 3 should read as follows: