Regulation Identification Number

A regulation identification number (RIN) is assigned to each regulatory action listed in the Unified Agenda of Federal Regulations. The Regulatory Information Service Center publishes the Unified Agenda in April and October of each year. The RIN contained in the heading of this document can be used to cross reference this action with the Unified Agenda.

List of Subjects in 49 CFR Part 393

Highway safety, Motor carriers, Motor vehicle safety.

Issued on: July 8, 1996.

Rodney E. Slater,

Federal Highway Administrator.

In consideration of the foregoing, the FHWA proposes to amend title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, subchapter B, chapter III, as follows:

PART 393—[AMENDED]

1. The authority citation for part 393 continues to read as follows:

Authority: Sec. 1041(b) of Pub. L. 102–240, 105 Stat. 1914, 1993 (1991), 49 U.S.C. 31136 and 31502; 49 CFR 1.48.

2. Section 393.5 is amended by adding the definition of *antilock brake system,* in alphabetical order, to read as follows:

* * * * *

Antilock Brake System or *ABS* means a portion of a service brake system that automatically controls the degree of rotational wheel slip during braking by:

(1) Sensing the rate of angular rotation of the wheels;

(2) Transmitting signals regarding the rate of wheel angular rotation to one or more controlling devices which interpret those signals and generate responsive controlling output signals; and

(3) Transmitting those controlling signals to one or more modulators which adjust brake actuating forces in response to those signals.

* * * * *

3. In subpart C, § 393.55 is added to read as follows:

§ 393.55 Antilock brake systems.

(a) *Hydraulic brake systems.* Each truck and bus manufactured on or after March 1, 1999, and equipped with a hydraulic brake system, shall be equipped with an antilock brake system that meets the requirements of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 105 (49 CFR 571.105, S5.5).

(b) *ABS malfunction indicators for hydraulic braked vehicles.* Each hydraulic braked vehicle subject to the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section shall be equipped with an ABS malfunction indicator system that meets the requirements of FMVSS No. 105 (49 CFR 571.105, S5.3).

(c) *Air brake systems.* (1) Each truck tractor manufactured on or after March 1, 1997, shall be equipped with an antilock brake system that meets the requirements of FMVSS No. 121 (49 CFR 571.121, S5.1.6.1(b)).

(2) Each air braked commercial motor vehicle other than a truck tractor, manufactured on or after March 1, 1998, shall be equipped with an antilock brake system that meets the requirements of FMVSS No. 121 (49 CFR 571.121, S5.1.6.1(a) for trucks and buses, S5.2.3 for semitrailers, converter dollies and full trailers).

(d) *ABS malfunction circuits and signals for air braked vehicles.* (1) Each truck tractor manufactured on or after March 1, 1997, and each single unit air braked vehicle manufactured on or after March 1, 1998, shall be equipped with an electrical circuit that is capable of signaling a malfunction that affects the generation or transmission of response or control signals to the vehicle's antilock brake system (49 CFR 571.121, S5.1.6.2(a)).

(2) Each truck tractor manufactured on or after March 1, 2001, and each single unit vehicle that is equipped to tow another air-braked vehicle, shall be equipped with an electrical circuit that is capable of transmitting a malfunction signal from the antilock brake system(s) on the towed vehicle(s) to the trailer ABS malfunction lamp in the cab of the towing vehicle, and shall have the means for connection of the electrical circuit to the towed vehicle. The ABS malfunction circuit and signal shall meet the requirements of FMVSS No. 121 (49 CFR 571.121, S5.1.6.2(b)).

(3) Each semitrailer, trailer converter dolly, and full trailer manufactured on or after March 1, 2001, and subject to the requirements of paragraph (b)(2) of this section, shall be equipped with an electrical circuit that is capable of signaling a malfunction in the trailer's antilock brake system, and shall have the means for connection of this ABS malfunction circuit to the towing vehicle. In addition, each trailer manufactured on or after March 1, 2001, that is designed to tow another air-brake equipped trailer shall be capable of transmitting a malfunction signal from the antilock brake system(s) of the trailer(s) it tows to the vehicle in front of the trailer. The ABS malfunction circuit and signal shall meet the requirements of FMVSS No. 121 (49 CFR 571.121, S5.2.3.2).

(e) *Exterior ABS malfunction indicator lamps for trailers.* Each trailer (including a trailer converter dolly) manufactured on or after March 1, 1998 and before March 1, 2009, shall be equipped with an ABS malfunction indicator lamp which meets the requirements of FMVSS No. 121 (49 CFR 571.121, S5.2.3.3).

[FR Doc. 96–17785 Filed 7–11–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–22–P

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

49 CFR Part 571

[Docket No. 93–94; Notice 3]

RIN 2127–AE47

Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; Antilock Brake Systems for Light Vehicles

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), DOT.

ACTION: Advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM); Deferral of rulemaking.

SUMMARY: This document defers a rulemaking proceeding in which the agency is considering whether to require light vehicles (those with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) equal to or less than 10,000 lbs.) to be equipped with antilock braking systems (ABS). This rulemaking proceeding was mandated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Authorization Act of 1991, which directed the agency to consider the need for any additional brake performance standards for passenger cars, including antilock brake standards. The agency believes it would be inappropriate at this time to require ABS for light vehicles for the following reasons: Most studies that have analyzed the accident involvement experiences of ABS-equipped light vehicles have found mixed patterns, with a reduction in accidents in some crash modes and an increase in accidents in other crash modes; even without a Federal requirement, a significant majority of light vehicles will be voluntarily equipped with ABS; and requiring ABS on those light vehicles that will not be equipped with ABS would result in significant costs that, on balance, cannot be justified at this time.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

For non-legal issues: Mr. Robert M. Clarke, Office of Crash Avoidance, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, D.C. 20590 (202) 366–5278.

For legal issues: Mr. Marvin L. Shaw, NCC–20, Rulemaking Division, Office of Chief Counsel, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, D.C. 20590 (202) 366–2992.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

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I. Background

A. Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Comments to That Notice

This rulemaking proceeding to consider the need for any additional brake performance standards for passenger cars, including antilock brake standards, was mandated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Authorization Act of 1991 (Public Law 102–240, December 18, 1991). On January 4, 1994, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issued an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM), soliciting comments about whether rulemaking was warranted to require that all light vehicles (i.e., those with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 10,000 lbs. or less) be equipped with antilock braking systems (ABS) (59 FR 281). The ANPRM also posed a number of questions relative to the regulatory approaches that might be employed if requirements were imposed; the types of performance tests that might be used; varieties of ABSs that might be appropriate; and regulatory implementation strategies and schedules that might be employed if requirements were established.

NHTSA received over 140 comments in response to the docket, the majority of which were from private citizens relating their experiences with ABS-equipped light vehicles. Other commenters included vehicle manufacturers (American Honda, BMW, Chrysler, Ford, General Motors, Mazda, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Porche, Subaru of America, Toyota, and Volkswagen) and brake manufacturers (AlliedSignal, ITT Teves of Germany (ITT Teves), ITT Automotive, and ABS Tech Sciences). Other organizations that commented included Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), the American Automobile Association (AAA), the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), the National School Transportation Association (NSTA), and the American Coalition for Traffic Safety.

Commenters expressed differing opinions about whether all light vehicles should be equipped with ABS. Toyota, ITT Teves, AlliedSignal, AAA, the NSTA, Edge Diagnosis Systems, and approximately 35 percent of the private citizen respondents stated that light vehicles should be required to be equipped with ABS. Nissan, Honda, Chrysler, Mitsubishi, Ford, Subaru, Volkswagen, Mazda, and IIHS, and approximately 65 percent of the private citizen respondents believed that equipping light vehicles with ABS should remain an optional choice for consumers. GM and BMW stated that they were not opposed to a requirement for ABS but indicated that additional information should be obtained before the agency made such a decision.

Commenters supporting a requirement that light vehicles be equipped with ABS offered the following reasons:

- Equipping light vehicles with ABS would increase vehicle safety and enhance correct brake usage.
- Equipping light vehicles with ABS would improve lateral stability and steerability, and enhance braking performance.
- A requirement would eliminate an indefinite transition period for light vehicles to ABS. They believed that a protracted transition period would create the possibility of increased risks to drivers, especially for those who operate light vehicles with and without ABS brake systems.

Additionally, 31 private citizens commented about their positive experience with ABS-equipped light vehicles, such as near-miss crashes.

Commenters opposing a requirement that light vehicles be equipped with ABS offered the following reasons:

- Consumer demand for advanced safety systems including ABS is sufficient to encourage manufacturers to offer the systems.
- Equipping light vehicles with ABS should not be required until data conclusively demonstrate that ABS-equipped light vehicles are involved in fewer and less severe crashes.
- The costs associated with requiring that all light vehicles be equipped with ABS would increase the costs associated with purchasing new light vehicles. This added cost might discourage potential buyers of new light vehicles from purchasing other, optional improved safety features of new vehicles.
- Not all consumers need their light vehicles to be equipped with ABS, based on either their driving habits or the types of roads and/or road conditions they typically encounter.

Twenty-four private citizens submitted comments citing unfavorable experiences with their ABS-equipped light vehicles. These incidents typically involved braking on surfaces with low coefficients of friction. It appears that the drivers incorrectly assumed the ABS would help them stop in shorter distances. These commenters cited additional reasons why they think ABS on light vehicles should remain optional, including concerns that:

- A requirement would add significant costs, thereby lowering the affordability of less expensive vehicles. This would create an incentive for consumers to keep their older, potentially less safe, vehicles longer.
- Insurance industry studies showing no reductions in the number of insurance claims or costs per claim for ABS-equipped light vehicles, compared to non-ABS-equipped light vehicles, do not support a requirement for ABS on such vehicles.
- Repairs of ABS on light vehicles could be expensive which could result in some consumers deciding not to repair these systems.
- There are too few instances where equipping a light vehicle with ABS would be useful.
- The brake pedal pulsation and system noise, evident when some systems activate, could frighten or distract drivers.
- Average drivers lack the skill to capitalize on the main benefit of ABS, the ability to execute aggressive crash-avoidance steering maneuvers.

B. NHTSA Evaluations of the Performance of Light Vehicles Equipped With ABS

The January 1994 ANPRM referenced test track evaluations of ABS-equipped light vehicles,[1] including a December 1991 report which describes tests conducted on ten light vehicles to evaluate the improvement in braking performance and vehicle stability and control resulting from ABS. The test program's purpose was to show the degree to which an ABS improves a light vehicle's braking performance. Among the principal findings in the

[1] Hiltner, Arehart, and Radlinski, ''Light Vehicle ABS Performance Evaluation,'' DOT HS 807 813, December 1991; and ''Light Vehicle ABS Performance Evaluation—Phase II,'' DOT HS 807 924, May 1992.

report were that each ABS, and especially all-wheel systems, improved the light vehicle's lateral stability during panic braking, and that the all-wheel systems shortened stopping distances on most hard paved surfaces, with improvements of between 25 to 50 percent on wet surfaces.

A May 1992 report described tests conducted on eight light vehicles to evaluate how the ABS influenced vehicle stopping distance and lateral stability and control on various surfaces. Among the report's principle findings were that seven of the eight vehicles were under complete directional control during the tests with ABS ''on,'' and that ABSs improved stopping performance on all surfaces, except for stops on dry gravel surfaces.

In 1994, NHTSA issued a third report evaluating ABS performance.[2] On February 9, 1995, NHTSA published a notice requesting comments about this report. (60 FR 7814). The report evaluated the accident rates of ABS-equipped cars currently on the road and compared them to the accident rates of similar cars without ABS. The principal findings of and conclusions of this report were that (1) ABS reduced the involvements of passenger cars in multi-vehicle crashes on wet roads by 14 percent and reduced those involving fatalities by 24 percent, (2) ABS had little effect on multi-vehicle crashes on dry roads, (3) ABS reduced the risk of fatal collisions with pedestrians by 27 percent in ABS equipped passenger cars, (4) run-off-road crashes (e.g., rollovers, side and front impacts with fixed objects) increased by 19 percent for nonfatal crashes and 28 percent for fatal crashes, and (5) the overall, net effect of light vehicle ABS on both fatal and nonfatal accidents was close to zero.

NHTSA received comments about this study from Volkswagen, the American Automobile Manufactures Association (AAMA), the National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA), General Motors, and Advocates. The commenters generally believed that the NHTSA study should not be considered definitive until additional studies and analysis have been conducted. Volkswagen, NADA, GM, Toyota, and Advocates supported NHTSA's efforts to conduct additional research and to educate the driving public on the advantages and limitations of ABS. GM, Toyota, and NADA agreed with several hypotheses presented by NHTSA to explain why ABS, which clearly improves vehicle performance in controlled maneuvers, appeared to have minimal effect in reducing overall crash rates. In contrast, Advocates disagreed with the agency's risk compensation and driver error hypotheses as possible explanations for why ABS-equipped cars have more run-off-the-road crashes. Advocates also stated that these findings indicate that vehicle platforms need to be redesigned to prevent rollover crashes, since ABS often will not prevent such crashes.

C. Other Studies About the Effectiveness of Light Vehicle ABS

In addition to NHTSA's efforts, several other organizations have evaluated the effectiveness of light vehicle ABS. Studies conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), which compared insurance claims for 1991 and 1992 model year cars with and without ABS, showed no reduction in claims for cars equipped with ABS.[3] Another study[4] based its conclusions on the same set of data collected by HLDI, yielding similar findings.

Another study[5] by Evans demonstrated that, although benefits associated with ABS-equipped light vehicles may not be seen in general, ABS does have a positive effect in reducing certain types of accidents, while possibly being associated with increases in others.

A recent study by Lau and Padmanaban (1996), reported more favorable results; namely, that ABS-equipped light vehicles were experiencing lower overall crash involvement rates.[6] However, the study reported no measurable difference in the rate of involvements in fatal crashes between light vehicles with and without ABS. The agency notes that the difference in the finding relative to overall crash involvement rates, compared to other studies that found no significant change in crash involvement rates, is primarily the result of different assumptions about which populations of vehicles were appropriate to include in the comparison.

II. NHTSA's Decision to Defer Rulemaking

After reviewing the available information, NHTSA has decided to defer indefinitely its decision about whether to require equipping light vehicles with antilock braking systems until a later date. The agency believes it would be inappropriate to currently mandate such a requirement for the following reasons: (1) most studies that have analyzed the accident involvement experiences of ABS-equipped light vehicles have found mixed patterns, with a reduction in accidents in some crash modes but an increase in accidents in other crash modes, (2) even without a Federal requirement, a significant majority of light vehicles will be voluntarily equipped with ABS, (3) and requiring ABS on those light vehicles that will not be equipped with ABS would result in significant costs that, on balance, cannot be justified at this time.

In a separate rulemaking, NHTSA decided to require that medium and heavy vehicles be equipped with ABS (60 FR 13216, March 10, 1995). The agency emphasizes that its decision not to require that light vehicles be equipped with ABS is applicable only to light vehicles and not to medium and heavy vehicles, and therefore should not be interpreted as being inconsistent with this earlier decision. The two rulemakings are readily distinguishable. The studies discussed in today's notice only studied the accident involvement patterns of ABS on light vehicles; they did not evaluate the accident involvement patterns of ABS on medium or heavy vehicles. Tractor trailer combinations are more prone to loss of stability and control including jackknifing, given that they have an articulation point. ABS provides more potential benefits for vehicles, such as medium and heavy ones, which have a greater disparity between their lightly loaded and fully loaded weights. An out-of-control medium or heavy vehicle (that can weigh 10,000 to 80,000 pounds) is more dangerous in collisions with other vehicles than an out-of-control light vehicle.

A. Studies Evaluating the Accident Involvement of Light Vehicle ABS

NHTSA believes that the increased involvements in some crash modes with ABS equipped light vehicles, especially single vehicle run-off-road crashes, may be due to a lack of driver knowledge rather than the performance attributes of ABS. This is consistent with track test

[2] Kahane, C. *Preliminary Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Antilock Brake Systems for Passenger Cars* (DOT Rep. No HS 808 206). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (1994)

[3] Highway Loss Data *Institute. Collision and Property Damage Liability Losses of Passenger Cars With and Without Antilock Brakes.* (Research Report HLDI A41). Arlington, VA (1994, January).

[4] Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. (1994, January). ''Antilocks May Not Make the Difference That Many Expected.; What Antilocks Can Do, What They Cannot Do.'' *Status Report*, *29*(2), 1–5, Arlington, VA

[5] Evans, L. (1995). *ABS and Relative Crash Risk Under Different Roadway, Weather, and Other Conditions.* SAE Paper 950353.

[6] Lau, E., and Padmanaban, J., *Accident Experience of Passenger Vehicles with Four-Wheel Antilock Braking Systems*, Failure Analysis Associates, Inc., Menlo Park, CA, January 1996.

results, conducted by professional drivers, indicating that ABS-equipped light vehicles have better stability and control than non-ABS equipped light vehicles. NHTSA believes that the ability of an ABS-equipped light vehicle to reduce crashes is linked closely to a driver's ability to use its performance capabilities. The agency plans to conduct further analyses to evaluate how driver behavior and performance affect how well light vehicle ABS reduces crashes.

One possible explanation for the increase in single vehicle run-off-road accidents may be due to driver steering behavior rather than the functioning of a light vehicle's ABS.

NHTSA notes that typical panic steering in non-ABS light vehicles is often characterized by a three-stage maneuver: (1) a large steering input to avoid a collision with the obstacle; (2) a reverse steering input to stop lateral deviation and correct for vehicle heading, and 3) an attempt to regain vehicle control by returning to an appropriate lane.[7] ABS-equipped light vehicles allow drivers the opportunity to maneuver around an obstacle, while keeping the vehicle under control, but having such capability does not guarantee a potential crash will be avoided.

NHTSA has considered certain hypotheses to explain why some drivers of ABS-equipped light vehicles may leave the road: (1) Some drivers are unaware of how ABS functions, (2) some drivers do not know how to react properly to crash threats, and (3) some drivers may drive more aggressively with ABS.

NHTSA believes that drivers of ABS-equipped light vehicles may ''pump'' their brake pedals in crash-imminent situations, thereby defeating the purpose of the ABS. Also, when activated, some ABS systems emit a chattering noise or cause the brake pedal to pulsate, which could confuse drivers into thinking their brakes have failed. Other drivers have reported their belief that the ABS-equipped light vehicle is stopping poorly, because tires on such vehicles do not squeal.

Some drivers may be oversteering their vehicles in an attempt to avoid a crash threat, thereby causing the vehicles to lose control and spin out. Other drivers may purposely steer off the road in crash-imminent situations, either because they incorrectly see no other option or because they decide this is their best option. Further, light vehicle ABS performance in situations where drivers make evasive maneuvers on loose surfaces such as gravel or grass could exacerbate drivers' lack of skill when executing extreme braking and steering maneuvers.

Some drivers may be driving more aggressively because they think that their ABS equipped light vehicle can stop better. This has been termed ''risk compensation'' or ''risk homeostasis.''

NHTSA is continuing its efforts to review crash data sets, individual crash case histories, and other information to evaluate these hypotheses. Also, the agency has established a sub-group of its motor vehicle safety research advisory committee to specifically address this problem. Meanwhile, conclusions regarding the effectiveness of ABS-equipped light vehicles which are based on the analysis of currently available accident databases should be viewed with caution. Given increased driver knowledge and experience with ABS-equipped light vehicles, the agency believes that the number of crashes involving such vehicles may decline. In addition, more precise crash database analysis techniques may shed additional light on these questions.

B. Market Trends

As for the marketplace, NHTSA notes that there is a strong trend among vehicle manufacturers to voluntarily equip light vehicles with ABS in response to significant consumer demand for this technology.

As the data in Table 1 indicate, the percentage of new passenger cars equipped with four-wheel antilock systems has grown from 3.7 percent in 1989 to 57 percent in 1995. Most manufacturers have publicly indicated plans to offer ABS as either standard or optional equipment on nearly all of their passenger car lines within the next three years.

TABLE 1.—PERCENTAGE OF PASSENGER CARS SOLD IN THE U.S., EQUIPPED WITH ABS[1]

	Domestic cars % 4WABS	Import cars % 4WABS	Total cars % ABS
1989	3.7	13.6	6.5
1990	7.6	21.4	11.1
1991	14.1	26.0	17.1
1992	32.2	32.2	32.2
1993	42.3	37.0	41.2
1994	57.3	47.6	55.5
1995	57.1	.....	.....

[1] Source: *Wards Automotive,* 1990–1995.

Similar data for light trucks, as shown in Table 2, indicate even stronger trends in this regard, with ABS installation rates growing to 84.3 percent by 1994.

TABLE 2.—PERCENTAGE OF LIGHT TRUCKS SOLD IN THE U.S., EQUIPPED WITH ABS[1]

Model year	Import truck % ABS	Domestic truck % RWAL[2]	Domestic truck % 4WABS	Total truck % ABS
1989	—	59.5	—	—
1990	10.2	77.3	2.1	71.4
1991	41.5	77.1	6.2	77.8
1992	51.6	71.5	11.4	80.1
1993	67.9	52.2	31.9	83.0
1994	66.6	53.0	32.4	84.3

[7] Weirwille, W.W., ''Driver Steering Performance,'' in *Automotive Engineering and Litigation, Volume 1,* G.A. Peters and B.J. Peters, Eds., New York, Garland Publishing Co., 1984

TABLE 2.—PERCENTAGE OF LIGHT TRUCKS SOLD IN THE U.S., EQUIPPED WITH ABS [1]—Continued

Model year	Import truck % ABS	Domestic truck % RWAL [2]	Domestic truck % 4WABS	Total truck % ABS
1995	.....	34.7	56.2	

[1] Source: *Wards Automotive,* 1990–1995.
[2] RWAL=Rear Wheel Antilock System.

Based on this information, NHTSA continues to believe that a significant majority of the light vehicle fleet will be equipped with ABS, regardless of whether there is a Federal mandate for such systems. As a result, light vehicles will benefit from the stability and control characteristics obtained by equipping such vehicles with ABS. Accordingly, the agency's decision not to require light vehicles to be equipped with ABS is based in part on the wide scale voluntary installation of ABS.

C. Cost Implications

In the January 1994 ANPRM, NHTSA estimated that requiring all light vehicles to be equipped with ABS would cost approximately $1.04 billion annually to equip those vehicles that would not voluntarily be equipped. That notice stated that this cost consists of ABS hardware costs of $920 million, installation costs of about $80 million, and increased fuel costs of about $40 million due to a small increase in vehicle weight. The average retail price of an ABS system to the consumer was estimated to be $450. This price was based on a cost study of seven ABS systems entitled ''Evaluation of Costs of Antilock Brake Systems'' and a markup factor of 1.51. The agency's cost estimate assumed that all-wheel ABS would be required on all light vehicles. It projected that all-wheel ABS would be voluntarily installed as standard equipment in 85 percent of model year 1999 passenger cars. The remaining 15 percent, or about 1.4 million vehicles, would be equipped only as a result of this regulatory requirement. However, since the ABS installation rate for 1995 model year domestic passenger vehicle cars, as reported in Table 1, was little different from 1994, it appears that this projected 85 percent voluntary installation rate by 1999 could be somewhat optimistic. A voluntary installation rate of possibly as low as 70 percent by 1999 could occur, in which case the remaining 30 percent, or about 2.8 million passenger cars, would be equipped only if there were a regulatory requirement. Such a higher involuntary ABS installation rate would increase the estimated annual cost of a requirement for passenger cars from $710 million to $1,420 million. If this were to occur, the estimated annual cost for all light vehicles would increase to $1.75 billion.

The cost estimate also projected that all light trucks would be voluntarily equipped with ABS by model year 1999/2000, 75 percent of them having all-wheel systems. Thus, an additional 25 percent of new light trucks or about 1.5 million vehicles, would be involuntarily equipped with all-wheel ABS if the agency issued a final rule requiring this. In this case, all- wheel ABS hardware and installation costs would be about $200 more than those for rear-wheel systems.

NHTSA believes that the significant costs associated with manufacturers having to equip approximately 4.3 million additional vehicles with all-wheel ABS further justifies the agency's decision not to require light vehicles to be equipped with all-wheel ABS at this time. The studies discussed above do not support such a Federal requirement at this time. NHTSA emphasizes that the costs and benefits associated with light vehicle ABS contrasts sharply with the analyses the agency conducted for medium and heavy ABS, which determined that ABS was highly beneficial for such vehicles.

For the reasons set forth above, NHTSA has decided to defer this rulemaking action indefinitely.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 322, 30111, 30115, 30117 and 30166; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8.

Issued on: July 5, 1996.

Barry Felrice,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

[FR Doc. 96–17750 Filed 7–11–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–59–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[I.D. 070196E]

RIN 0648–AI95

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; North Pacific Fisheries Research Plan

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has submitted for review by NMFS the repeal of the North Pacific Fisheries Research Plan (Research Plan), Amendment 47 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska, Amendment 47 to the FMP for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (Groundfish FMPs), and Amendment 6 to the FMP for the Commercial King and Tanner Crab Fisheries in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (Crab FMP). NMFS is requesting comments on these proposed actions from the public. Repeal of the Research Plan would terminate the comprehensive North Pacific groundfish and crab observer program and the associated user-fee system developed by NMFS and the Council as authorized by section 313 of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson Act). Amendments 47 and 47 to the groundfish FMPs would establish an interim groundfish observer program to supersede the Research Plan and authorize mandatory groundfish observer coverage requirements for 1997. Amendment 6 to the crab FMP would remove reference to the Research Plan. Copies of the amendments may be obtained from the Council (see **ADDRESSES**).

DATES: Comments should be submitted by September 9, 1996.

A public hearing on the proposed repeal of the Research Plan will be held