

shoulder restraints that adjust by means of an automatic retractor and release by means of a single push button at both front designated seating positions, with combination lap and shoulder restraints that release by means of a single push button at both rear outboard designated seating positions, and with a lap belt in the rear center designated seating position.

Standard No. 214 *Side Impact Protection*: installation of reinforcing beams.

Standard No. 301 *Fuel System Integrity*: installation of a rollover valve in the fuel tank vent line between the fuel tank and the evaporative emissions collection canister.

The petitioner also states that a vehicle identification number plate must be affixed to the vehicle to meet the requirements of 49 CFR part 565.

Additionally, the petitioner states that an alarm system identical to that found on U.S.-certified models will be installed on each 1994 Mercedes-Benz C220 prior to importation so that the vehicle meets the Theft Prevention Standard found at 49 CFR part 541.

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the petition described above. Comments should refer to the docket number and be submitted to: Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5109, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590. It is requested but not required that 10 copies be submitted.

All comments received before the close of business on the closing date indicated above 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. Notice of final action on the petition will be published in the **Federal Register** pursuant to the authority indicated below.

**Authority:** 49 U.S.C. 30141(a)(1)(A) and (b)(1); 49 CFR 593.8; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8.

Issued on: March 18, 1998.

**Marilynne Jacobs,**

*Director, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance.*  
[FR Doc. 98-7455 Filed 3-20-98; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-98-3627]

#### Notice of Receipt of Petition for Decision That Nonconforming 1990-1993 Mercedes-Benz 250E and 1994-1995 E250 Passenger Cars Are Eligible for Importation

**AGENCY:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of receipt of petition for a decision that nonconforming 1990-1993 Mercedes-Benz 250E and 1994-1995 E250 passenger cars are eligible for importation.

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces receipt by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) of a petition for a decision that 1990-1993 Mercedes-Benz 250E and 1994-1995 E250 passenger cars that were not originally manufactured to comply with all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards are eligible for importation into the United States because (1) they are substantially similar to vehicles that were originally manufactured for importation into and sale in the United States and that were certified by their manufacturer as complying with the safety standards, and (2) they are capable of being readily altered to conform to the standards.

**DATES:** The closing date for comments on the petition is April 22, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments should refer to the docket number and notice number, and be submitted to: Docket Management, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, DC 20590. [Docket hours are from 10 am to 5 pm]

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** George Entwistle, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance, NHTSA (202-366-5306).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

Under 49 U.S.C. § 30141(a)(1)(A) (formerly section 108(c)(3)(A)(i) of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act (the Act)), a motor vehicle that was not originally manufactured to conform to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards shall be refused admission into the United States unless NHTSA has decided that the motor vehicle is substantially similar to a motor vehicle originally manufactured for importation into and sale in the United States, certified under 49 U.S.C. § 30115 (formerly section 114 of the

Act), and of the same model year as the model of the motor vehicle to be compared, and is capable of being readily altered to conform to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

Petitions for eligibility decisions may be submitted by either manufacturers or importers who have registered with NHTSA pursuant to 49 CFR part 592. As specified in 49 CFR 593.7, NHTSA publishes notice in the **Federal Register** of each petition that it receives, and affords interested persons an opportunity to comment on the petition. At the close of the comment period, NHTSA decides, on the basis of the petition and any comments that it has received, whether the vehicle is eligible for importation. The agency then publishes this decision in the **Federal Register**.

Bayway Auto of Newark, New Jersey (Bayway) (Registered Importer No. R-98-166) has petitioned NHTSA to decide whether 1990-1993 Mercedes-Benz 250E and 1994-1995 E250 passenger cars are eligible for importation into the United States. The vehicles which Bayway believes are substantially similar are 1990-1993 Mercedes-Benz 300E and 1994-1995 E300 passenger cars. Bayway has submitted information indicating that Daimler Benz, A.G., the company that manufactured the 1990-1993 Mercedes-Benz 300E and 1994-1995 E300, certified those vehicles as conforming to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards and offered them for sale in the United States.

The petitioner contends that it carefully compared the 1990-1993 Mercedes-Benz 250E and 1994-1995 E250 to the 1990-1993 Mercedes-Benz 300E and 1994-1995 E300, and found those models to be substantially similar with respect to compliance with most applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

Champagne submitted information with its petition intended to demonstrate that the 1990-1993 Mercedes-Benz 250E and 1994-1995 E250, as originally manufactured, conform to many Federal motor vehicle safety standards in the same manner as the 1990-1993 Mercedes-Benz 300E and 1994-1995 E300 that were offered for sale in the United States, or are capable of being readily altered to conform to those standards.

Specifically, the petitioner claims that the 1990-1993 Mercedes-Benz 250E and 1994-1995 E250 are identical to the certified 1990-1993 Mercedes-Benz 300E and 1994-1995 E300 with respect to compliance with Standards Nos. 102 *Transmission Shift Lever*

*Sequence \* \* \*, 103 Defrosting and Defogging Systems, 104 Windshield Wiping and Washing Systems, 105 Hydraulic Brake Systems, 106 Brake Hoses, 109 New Pneumatic Tires, 113 Hood Latch Systems, 116 Brake Fluid, 124 Accelerator Control Systems, 201 Occupant Protection in Interior Impact, 202 Head Restraints, 204 Steering Control Rearward Displacement, 205 Glazing Materials, 207 Seating Systems, 209 Seat Belt Assemblies, 210 Seat Belt Assembly Anchorages, 212 Windshield Retention, 216 Roof Crush Resistance, 219 Windshield Zone Intrusion, and 302 Flammability of Interior Materials.*

Additionally, the petitioner states that the 1990–1993 Mercedes-Benz 250E and 1994–1995 E250 comply with the Bumper Standard found in 49 CFR Part 581.

Petitioner also contends that the vehicles are capable of being readily altered to meet the following standards, in the manner indicated:

Standard No. 101 *Controls and Displays*: (a) Substitution of a lens marked “Brake” for a lens with an ECE symbol on the brake failure indicator lamp; (b) installation of a seat belt warning lamp that displays the appropriate symbol; (c) recalibration of the speedometer/odometer from kilometers to miles per hour.

Standard No. 108 *Lamps, Reflective Devices and Associated Equipment*: (a) Installation of U.S.-model headlamp assemblies which incorporate headlamps with a DOT marking; (b) installation of U.S.-model front and rear sidemarker/reflector taillamp assemblies; (c) installation of U.S.-model taillamp assemblies.

Standard No. 110 *Tire Selection and Rims*: installation of a tire information placard.

Standard No. 111 *Rearview Mirrors*: replacement of the passenger side rear view mirror with a U.S.-model component.

Standard No. 114 *Theft Protection*: installation of a buzzer microswitch in the steering lock assembly, and a warning buzzer.

Standard No. 118 *Power Window Systems*: rewiring of the power window system so that the window transport is inoperative when the ignition is switched off.

Standard No. 206 *Door Locks and Door Retention Components*: replacement of the rear door locks and locking buttons with U.S.-model parts.

Standard No. 208 *Occupant Crash Protection*: (a) Installation of a U.S.-model seat belt in the driver’s position, or a belt webbing-actuated microswitch inside the driver’s seat belt retractor; (b) installation of an ignition switch-

actuated seat belt warning lamp and buzzer; (c) replacement of the driver’s and passenger’s side air bags and knee bolsters with U.S.-model components if the vehicle is not so equipped. The petitioner states that 1990–1993 models are equipped with driver’s side air bags and knee bolsters and that 1994–1995 models are equipped with both driver’s and passenger’s side air bags and knee bolsters. The petitioner further states that all models are equipped with combination lap and shoulder restraints that adjust by means of an automatic retractor and release by means of a single push button at both front designated seating positions, with combination lap and shoulder restraints that release by means of a single push button at both rear outboard designated seating positions, and with a lap belt in the rear center designated seating position.

Standard No. 214 *Side Impact Protection*: installation of reinforcing beams.

Standard No. 301 *Fuel System Integrity*: installation of a rollover valve in the fuel tank vent line between the fuel tank and the evaporative emissions collection canister.

The petitioner also states that a vehicle identification number plate must be affixed to the vehicles to meet the requirements of 49 CFR part 565.

Additionally, the petitioner states that an alarm system identical to that found on U.S.-certified models will be installed on each 1990–1993 Mercedes-Benz 250E and 1994–1995 E250 prior to importation so that the vehicle meets the Theft Prevention Standard found at 49 CFR part 541.

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the petition described above. Comments should refer to the docket number and be submitted to: Docket Management, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, DC 20590. It is requested but not required that 10 copies be submitted.

All comments received before the close of business on the closing date indicated above 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. Notice of final action on the petition will be published in the **Federal Register** pursuant to the authority indicated below.

**Authority:** 49 U.S.C. 30141(a)(1)(A) and (b)(1); 49 CFR 593.8; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8.

Issued on: March 18, 1998.

**Marilynne Jacobs,**

*Director, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance.*  
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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA–98–3629]

#### Decision That Nonconforming 1974–1975 Volkswagen Type 181 (“The Thing”) Multi-Purpose Passenger Vehicles Are Eligible for Importation

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

**ACTION:** Notice of decision by NHTSA that nonconforming 1974–1975 Volkswagen Type 181 (“The Thing”) multi-purpose passenger vehicles (MPVs) are eligible for importation.

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces the decision by NHTSA that 1974–1975 Volkswagen Type 181 (“The Thing”) MPVs not originally manufactured to comply with all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards are eligible for importation into the United States because they are substantially similar to vehicles originally manufactured for importation into and sale in the United States and certified by their manufacturer as complying with the safety standards (the U.S.-certified version of 1974–1975 Volkswagen Type 181 (“The Thing”) MPVs), and they are capable of being readily altered to conform to the standards.

**DATES:** This decision is effective March 23, 1998.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** George Entwistle, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance, NHTSA (202–366–5306).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

Under 49 U.S.C. § 30141(a)(1)(A), a motor vehicle that was not originally manufactured to conform to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards shall be refused admission into the United States unless NHTSA has decided that the motor vehicle is substantially similar to a motor vehicle originally manufactured for importation into and sale in the United States, certified under 49 U.S.C. § 30115, and of the same model year as the model of the motor vehicle to be compared, and is capable of being readily altered to conform to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards.