

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.

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**.

Wallace Environmental Testing Laboratories, Inc. (WETL) of Houston, TX (Registered Importer 90-005) has petitioned NHTSA to decide whether nonconforming 2001 Chevrolet Blazer multipurpose passenger vehicles are eligible for importation into the United States. The vehicles which WETL believes are substantially similar are 2001 Chevrolet Blazer multipurpose passenger vehicles that were manufactured for sale in the United States and certified by their manufacturer as conforming to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

The petitioner claims that it carefully compared non-U.S. certified 2001 Chevrolet Blazer multipurpose passenger vehicles to their U.S.-certified counterparts, and found the vehicles to be substantially similar with respect to compliance with all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

WETL submitted information with its petition intended to demonstrate that non-U.S. certified 2001 Chevrolet Blazer multipurpose passenger vehicles, as originally manufactured, conform to many Federal motor vehicle safety standards in the same manner as their U.S. certified counterparts, or are capable of being readily altered to conform to those standards.

Specifically, the petitioner claims that non-U.S. certified 2001 Chevrolet Blazer multipurpose passenger vehicles are identical to their U.S. certified counterparts with respect to compliance with Standard Nos. 102 *Transmission Shift Lever Sequence, Starter Interlock,*

and Transmission Braking Effect, 103 *Windshield Defrosting and Defogging Systems*, 104 *Windshield Wiping and Washing Systems*, 105 *Hydraulic and Electric Brake Systems*, 106 *Brake Hoses*, 111 *Rearview Mirrors*, 113 *Hood Latch System*, 114 *Theft Protection*, 116 *Motor Vehicle Brake Fluids*, 118 *Power-Operated Window, Partition, and Roof Panel Systems*, 119 *New Pneumatic Tires for Vehicles Other than Passenger Cars*, 120 *Tire Selection and Rims for Motor Vehicles Other than Passenger Cars*, 124 *Accelerator Control Systems*, 201 *Occupant Protection in Interior Impact*, 202 *Head Restraints*, 204 *Steering Control Rearward Displacement*, 205 *Glazing Materials*, 206 *Door Locks and Door Retention Components*, 207 *Seating Systems*, 208 *Occupant Crash Protection*, 209 *Seat Belt Assemblies*, 210 *Seat Belt Assembly Anchorages*, 212 *Windshield Mounting*, 214 *Side Impact Protection*, 216 *Roof Crush Resistance*, 219 *Windshield Zone Intrusion*, 301 *Fuel System Integrity*, and 302 *Flammability of Interior Materials*.

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*: Substitution of a lens marked "Brake" for a lens with a noncomplying symbol on the brake failure indicator lamp.

Standard No. 108 *Lamps, Reflective Devices and Associated Equipment*: Installation of U.S.-model headlamp assemblies that incorporate front side marker lamps.

Standard No. 225 *Child Restraint Anchorage Systems*: Inspection of all vehicles manufactured on or after 9-1-2000, and installation of U.S.-model child seat tether anchorages if the vehicle is not already so equipped.

The petitioner also states that all vehicles will be inspected prior to importation to assure compliance with the Theft Prevention Standard at 49 CFR Part 541, and that anti-theft devices will be installed, if necessary, to comply with that standard.

The petitioner additionally states that a vehicle identification plate must be affixed to the vehicles near the left windshield post to meet the requirements of 49 CFR Part 565.

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. (Docket hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) 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.

Claude H. Harris,
Director, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance.
[FR Doc. 04-25421 Filed 11-15-04; 8:45 am]
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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-2004-19548]

Notice of Receipt of Petition for Decision That Nonconforming 1998 Lexus GS300 Passenger Cars Are Eligible for Importation

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of receipt of petition for decision that nonconforming 1998 Lexus GS300 passenger cars are eligible for importation.

SUMMARY: This document announces receipt by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) of a petition for a decision that 1998 Lexus GS300 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 December 16, 2004.

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 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.] Anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the

comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 70; Pages 19477-78) or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Coleman Sachs, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance, NHTSA (202-366-3151).

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.

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**.

Sunshine Car Import ("SCI") of Ft. Myers, Florida, (Registered Importer 01-289) has petitioned NHTSA to decide whether nonconforming 1998 Lexus GS300 passenger cars are eligible for importation into the United States. The vehicles which SCI believes are substantially similar are 1998 Lexus GS300 passenger cars that were manufactured for importation into, and sale in, the United States and certified by their manufacturer as conforming to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

The petitioner claims that it carefully compared non-U.S. certified 1998 Lexus GS300 passenger cars to their U.S.-certified counterparts, and found the vehicles to be substantially similar with respect to compliance with most Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

SCI submitted information with its petition intended to demonstrate that

non-U.S. certified 1998 Lexus GS300 passenger cars, as originally manufactured, conform to many Federal motor vehicle safety standards in the same manner as their U.S. certified counterparts, or are capable of being readily altered to conform to those standards.

Specifically, the petitioner claims that non-U.S. certified 1998 Lexus GS300 passenger cars are identical to their U.S. certified counterparts with respect to compliance with Standard Nos. 102 *Transmission Shift Lever Sequence, Starter Interlock, and Transmission Braking Effect*, 103 *Windshield Defrosting and Defogging Systems*, 104 *Windshield Wiping and Washing Systems*, 105, *Hydraulic and Electric Brake Systems*, 106 *Brake Hoses*, 109 *New Pneumatic Tires*, 113 *Hood Latch System*, 116 *Motor Vehicle Brake Fluids*, 124 *Accelerator Control Systems*, 201 *Occupant Protection in Interior Impact*, 202 *Head Restraints*, 204 *Steering Control Rearward Displacement*, 205 *Glazing Materials*, 206 *Door Locks and Door Retention Components*, 207 *Seating Systems*, 209 *Seat Belt Assemblies*, 210 *Seat Belt Assembly Anchorages*, 212 *Windshield Mounting*, 216 *Roof Crush Resistance*, 219 *Windshield Zone Intrusion*, 301 *Fuel System Integrity*, and 302 *Flammability of Interior Materials*.

The 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) Inscription of the word "brake" on the instrument cluster in place of the international ECE warning symbol, and (b) replacement or conversion of the speedometer to read in miles per hours.

Standard No. 108 *Lamps, Reflective Devices and Associated Equipment*: Inspection of all vehicles and replacement of any non-U.S. model components required to meet the requirements of this standard with U.S.-model components.

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

Standard No. 111 *Rearview Mirrors*: Installation of a U.S.-model passenger side rearview mirror, or inscription of the required warning statement on the face of that mirror.

Standard No. 114 *Theft Protection*: Installation of a supplemental key warning buzzer system to meet the requirements of this standard.

Standard No. 118 *Power-Operated Window, Partition, and Roof Panel Systems*: Inspection of all vehicles and installation, on vehicles that do not

already meet the requirements of the standard, of a supplemental relay system to meet the requirements of the standard.

Standard No. 208 *Occupant Crash Protection*: (a) Installation of U.S. version software to ensure that the seat belt warning system meets the requirements of this standard, (b) installation of U.S.-model driver's side airbag and front seat belts, and (c) inspection of all vehicles and replacement of any non-U.S.-model components necessary for conformity with this standard with U.S.-model components.

Petitioner states that the restraint systems used in the vehicles include airbags and knee bolsters at the front outboard seating positions as well as combination lap and shoulder belts at the front and rear designated seating positions. These seat belt systems are self-tensioning and release by means of a single red pushbutton.

Standard No. 214 *Side Impact Protection*: Inspection of all vehicles and replacement of any non-U.S.-model components necessary for conformity with this standard with U.S.-model components.

The petitioner also states that all vehicles will be inspected prior to importation to assure compliance with the Theft Prevention Standard at 49 CFR part 541, and that vehicles will be modified, if necessary, to comply with that standard.

The petitioner additionally states that a vehicle identification plate must be affixed to the vehicles near the left windshield post to meet the requirements of 49 CFR part 565.

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. [Docket hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.] 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.

Claude H. Harris,

Director, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance.

[FR Doc. 04-25426 Filed 11-15-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA 2004-17939; Notice 2]

Bentley Motors, Inc., Grant of Petition for Decision of Inconsequential Noncompliance

Bentley Motors, Inc. (Bentley) has determined that certain vehicles that it manufactured in 2004 do not comply with S4.2.2(a) of 49 CFR 571.114, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 114, "Theft protection." Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 30118(d) and 30120(h), Bentley has petitioned for a determination that this noncompliance is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety and has filed an appropriate report pursuant to 49 CFR part 573, "Defect and Noncompliance Reports." Notice of receipt of a petition was published, with a 30-day comment period, on June 1, 2004, in the **Federal Register** (69 FR 30990). NHTSA received no comments.

Approximately 464 model year 2004 Bentley Continental GT vehicles are affected. S4.2.2(a) of FMVSS No. 114 requires that

* * * provided that steering is prevented upon the key's removal, each vehicle * * * [which has an automatic transmission with a "park" position] may permit key removal when electrical failure of this [key-locking] system * * * occurs or may have a device which, when activated, permits key removal.

In the affected vehicles, the steering does not lock when the ignition key is removed from the ignition switch using the optionally provided device that permits key removal in the event of electrical system failure or when the transmission is not in the "park" position.

Bentley believes the noncompliance is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety and that no corrective action is warranted. Bentley explained:

In the Bentley Continental GT, for which this petition is submitted, the ability to remove the ignition key using the key removal device is a primary security and safety feature (to the extent that it prevents the vehicle from being driven) because the vehicle is equipped with an electronic immobilizer which prevents starting of the engine unless the electronically coded ignition key provided

for that vehicle is used in the electronic steering column/ignition switch. The "code" to start the engine and activate the fuel and ignition system is embedded in the engine control module and therefore cannot be bypassed or defeated. If the ignition key cannot be removed in the event of vehicle power failure, the driver will not be able to lock the vehicle and the car may be capable of being started and driven by anyone who can repair it (which may be as simple as use of an external electrical supply/battery), because the electronically coded ignition key remains in the steering column/ignition switch.

Bentley explained that when there is no vehicle power failure and the override device is used to remove the key when the transmission is not in "park," there is no risk to motor vehicle safety because this would occur only in a repair shop or under supervised conditions when the vehicle must be moved but it is desired to remove the key for security reasons. Bentley stated that in this case, the electronic immobilizer provides anti-theft protection and the steering lock is not significant.

The agency agrees with Bentley. The owner's manuals for these vehicles state as follows:

There is a chip in the [ignition] key. It automatically deactivates the immobilizer when the key is inserted into the ignition lock. The electronic immobilizer is automatically activated when you take the key out of the ignition lock.

NHTSA issued an interpretation letter to an unnamed person on September 24, 2004, which stated in pertinent part as follows:

The engine control module immobilizer described in your letter satisfies the requirements of S4.2(b) because it locks out the engine control module if an attempt is made to start the vehicle without the correct key or to bypass the electronic ignition system. When the engine control module is locked, the vehicle is not capable of forward self-mobility because it is incapable of moving forward under its own power.

Theft protection of vehicles is addressed under S4.2 of the standard. Section 4.2(b) can be met by preventing either steering or forward self-mobility. Therefore, an equivalent level of theft protection is provided by "either steering or forward self-mobility."

NHTSA amended FMVSS No. 114 in 1990 to require that vehicles with an automatic transmission and a "park" position be shifted to "park" or become locked in park before the key can be removed to reduce incidents of vehicle rollaway. S4.2.2(a) was added in 1991 to permit key removal when an electrical failure occurred and the transmission could not be manually shifted into park,

provided that steering was prevented for theft protection.

The forward self-mobility feature does not prevent vehicle rollaway by itself. However, the parking brake used in combination with the forward self-mobility feature will prevent rollaway. The owner's manuals for these vehicles include the following information:

The parking brake can be used to prevent the vehicle from moving unintentionally. Always apply the parking brake when you leave your vehicle and when you park.

If an electrical failure occurs when the transmission is not in park, the driver may be able to remove the ignition key using the information in the owner's manual, but will more likely contact the manufacturer's hotline or dealer for assistance. Bentley is instructing its hotline staff and advising its dealers via a service bulletin to ask the caller to ensure that the parking brake is firmly applied before attempting to remove the key.

In consideration of the foregoing, NHTSA has decided that the petitioner has met its burden of persuasion that the noncompliance described is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety. Accordingly, Bentley's petition is granted and the petitioner is exempted from the obligation of providing notification of, and a remedy for, the noncompliance.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 30118, 30120; delegations of authority at CFR 1.50 and 501.8.

Issued on: November 10, 2004.

Kenneth N. Weinstein,

Associate Administrator for Enforcement.

[FR Doc. 04-25423 Filed 11-15-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA 2004-17902; Notice 2]

Volkswagen of America, Inc., Grant of Petition for Decision of Inconsequential Noncompliance

Volkswagen of America, Inc. (Volkswagen) has determined that certain vehicles that were produced by Volkswagen AG and AUDI AG in 2004 do not comply with S4.2.2(a) of 49 CFR 571.114, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 114, "Theft protection." Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 30118(d) and 30120(h), Volkswagen has petitioned for a determination that this noncompliance is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety and has filed an appropriate report pursuant to 49 CFR