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UMTA PUBLISHES MODIFICATION TO BUS TESTING INTERIM FINAL RULE

The Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) today announced it has published a modification to an interim final rule that will expand the agency's testing program of new bus models to include all medium-duty buses.

UMTA regulations require all new bus models to be tested if UMTA grant funds are used in the purchase of the buses.

"There are significant procurement advantages to the testing requirement," UMTA Administrator Brian W. Clymer said. "Transit agencies will have the benefit of knowing how well a new bus model tested for durability, safety and maintainability before they take delivery of it."

This change makes all medium-duty buses with a service life of seven years or 200,000 miles subject to testing. During the interim start-up period, only three categories of buses were proposed for testing, heavy-duty large buses (35-40 feet, as well as articulated buses, with a minimum service life of 12 years or 500,000 miles), heavy-duty small buses (30 feet with a minimum service life of ten years or 350,000 miles) and purpose-built medium-duty buses (25-35 feet with a minimum service life of seven years or 200,000 miles).

The rule also extends the transition period from Sept. 30, 1990, to July 1, 1991. The transition period for the bus testing facility began Oct. 1, 1989, in anticipation of a final rule being published no later than Sept. 1, 1990. However, additional time is needed before the testing facility will reach full operational capacity.

The modified rule also clarifies the definition of a "new bus model" by providing examples of major changes in components and in configuration that would require a vehicle to be tested. Although not inclusive, the list of components includes such parts as the engine, transmission, or steering, while changes in configuration include modifications that may significantly affect vehicle handling or stability.

The testing facility is operated by Pennsylvania State University under contract to UMTA. Each manufacturer pays a fee to have a vehicle tested.

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**Urban Mass
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