

Modify the cable release sliders of the escape slide/raft pack assembly (includes overhauling or replacing the cable release sliders and installing washers on the outboard pack cover, as applicable), per Boeing Special Attention Service Bulletin 747-25-3307, dated November 21, 2002.

Part Installation

(c) As of the effective date of this AD, no one may install, on any airplane, a pin cable assembly with a part number listed in the "Existing Part Number" column of the table in Appendix A of Boeing Special Attention Service Bulletin 747-25-3274, Revision 1, dated January 9, 2003.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

(d) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Seattle ACO.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Seattle ACO.

Special Flight Permit

(e) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with §§ 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on September 4, 2003.

Vi L. Lipski,

*Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.*

[FR Doc. 03-22992 Filed 9-9-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

29 CFR Parts 1910, 1915, and 1926

[Docket No. H049C]

RIN 1218-AA05

Assigned Protection Factors

AGENCY: Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Department of Labor.

ACTION: Proposed rule; extension of comment period.

SUMMARY: OSHA is extending the deadline for receipt of public comments on its proposed rule "Assigned Protection Factors" to October 2, 2003. This action is in response to interested parties who have requested the additional time.

DATES: Comments and data must be submitted by October 2, 2003. Comments submitted by mail must be postmarked no later than October 2, 2003.

ADDRESSES: *Written comments.* You may submit three copies of written comments to the Docket Office, Docket No. H-049C, Technical Data Center, Room N-2625, OSHA, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20210; telephone (202) 693-2350. If your written comments are 10 pages or fewer, you may fax them to the OSHA Docket Office, telephone number (202) 693-1648. You do not have to send OSHA a hard copy of your faxed comments. You may submit comments electronically through OSHA's Homepage at <http://ecomments.osha.gov/>. You may not attach materials such as studies or journal articles to your electronic comments. If you wish to include such materials, you must submit three copies of them to the OSHA Docket Office at the address above. These materials must clearly identify your electronic comments by name, date, subject, and docket number so we can attach them to your comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For technical inquiries, contact Mr. John E. Steelnack, Directorate of Standards and Guidance, Room N-3718, OSHA, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20210; telephone (202) 693-2289 or fax (202) 693-1678. For additional copies of this **Federal Register** notice, contact the Office of Publications, Room N-3103, OSHA, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20210 (telephone (202) 693-1888). Electronic copies of this **Federal Register** notice, as well as news releases and other relevant documents, are available at OSHA's website on the Internet at <http://www.osha.gov/>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: OSHA published the final, revised Respiratory Protection Standard, 29 CFR 1910.134, on January 8, 1998 (63 FR 1152). The standard contains worksite-specific requirements for program administration, procedures for respirator selection, employee training, fit testing, medical evaluation, respirator use, and other provisions. However, OSHA reserved the sections of the final standard related to assigned protection factors (APFs) and maximum use concentration (MUC) pending further rulemaking (see 63 FR 1182 and 1203). On June 6, 2003, (68 FR 34036), OSHA published a proposal to revise its existing Respiratory Protection Standard to add definitions and specific

requirements for APFs and MUCs. The proposed revisions also would supersede the respirator selection provisions of existing substance-specific standards with these new APFs (except the APFs for the 1,3-Butadiene Standard). The period for filing public comment on the proposal was to end on September 4, 2003. Several interested parties, including the Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, have requested an extension of the deadline for submitting comments based on the need for additional time to address assigned protection factors, as well as the changes to several substance-specific standards, proposed for revision in the notice. OSHA is granting the request and extending the deadline for submitting comments to October 2, 2003.

Authority

John L. Henshaw, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20210, directed the preparation of this notice. It is issued under Sections 4, 6(b), 8(c), and 8(g) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. 653, 655, 657); section 107 of the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (the Construction Safety Act) (40 U.S.C. 333); section 41, the Longshore and Harbor Worker's Compensation Act (33 U.S.C. 941); Secretary of Labor's Order No. 5-2002 (67 FR 65008); and 29 CFR part 1911.

Signed at Washington, DC, on September 4, 2003.

John L. Henshaw,

Assistant Secretary of Labor.

[FR Doc. 03-23078 Filed 9-9-03; 8:45 am]

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

47 CFR Part 51

[CC Docket No. 01-338; CC Docket No. 96-98; CC Docket No. 98-147; FCC 03-36]

Review of the Section 251 Unbundling Obligations of Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers

AGENCY: Federal Communications Commission.

ACTION: Proposed rule; correction.

SUMMARY: This document corrects an error in the **DATES** section of a **Federal Register** document regarding the Commission's inquiry regarding proposed modifications to the Commission's existing rules

implementing section 252(i) which requires local exchange carriers (LECs) to make available to other telecommunications carriers interconnection agreements approved under section 252.

DATES: Comments are due on October 2, 2003 and Reply Comments are due on November 3, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jeremy Miller, Attorney-Advisor, Competition Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, (202) 418-1580.

In rule FR Doc. 03-22194 published September 2, 2003 (68 FR 52307) make the following correction.

1. On page 52307, in the first column, in the dates section remove "Reply Comments are due October 23, 2003" and add "Reply Comments are due November 3, 2003" in its place.

Federal Communications Commission.

Marlene H. Dortch,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 03-22970 Filed 9-9-03; 8:45 am]

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OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

48 CFR Part 9904

Cost Accounting Standards Board; Accounting for the Costs of Post-Retirement Benefit Plans Sponsored by Government Contractors

AGENCY: Cost Accounting Standards Board, Office of Federal Procurement Policy, OMB.

ACTION: Notice of withdrawal of Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

SUMMARY: The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), Cost Accounting Standards (CAS) Board, is providing public notification of the decision to discontinue the development of a Cost Accounting Standard (CAS) addressing the recognition of costs of post-retirement benefit plans under government cost-based contracts and subcontracts.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robert Burton, Office of Federal Procurement Policy (telephone: 202-395-3302).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Regulatory Process

The Cost Accounting Standards Board's rules, regulations and Standards are codified at 48 CFR Chapter 99. The Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act, 41 U.S.C. 422(g)(1), requires the Board, prior to the establishment of any

new or revised Cost Accounting Standard, to complete a prescribed rulemaking process. The process generally consists of the following four steps:

1. Consult with interested persons concerning the advantages, disadvantages, and improvements anticipated in the pricing and administration of government contracts as a result of the adoption of a proposed Standard.
2. Promulgate an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM).
3. Promulgate a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM).
4. Promulgate a Final Rule.

This notice announces the discontinuation of a case after completing steps one and two of the four-step process in accordance with the requirements of 41 U.S.C. 422(g)(1)(B) and (C).

B. Background and Summary

Prior Promulgations

Post-retirement benefit plans have existed for many years, but received little attention until the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) examined the potential liabilities and costs of these plans and issued Statement No. 106, "Employers' Accounting for Post-Retirement Benefits Other Than Pensions" (SFAS 106), in December of 1990. In response to numerous public comments recommending that the CAS Board establish a case concerning the measurement, assignment, and allocation of the costs of post-retirement benefit plans, at a February 24, 1995 meeting, the CAS Board directed the staff to begin work on a Staff Discussion Paper (SDP).

On September 20, 1996, the Board published an SDP, "Post-Retirement Benefit Plans Other Than Pension Plans Sponsored by Government Contractors" (61 FR 49533), identifying the cost accounting issues related to post-retirement benefit plans. On January 12, 1999, the Board sent a letter to all the respondents to the SDP. This letter was also made widely available for public comment on February 18, 1999 (64 FR 8141).

The Board published an ANPRM (65 FR 59503), "Accounting for the Costs of Post-Retirement Benefit Plans Sponsored by Government Contractors," on October 5, 2000.

Public Comments

The Board received twenty-three (23) sets of public comments in response to the ANPRM. Most respondents believed that accrual accounting following the provisions of SFAS 106 was the most appropriate basis for measuring and

assigning the costs of a post-retirement benefit plan that created a firm liability. However, many respondents believed that the imposition of any nonforfeitable criteria, as proposed, could lock a contractor into providing explicit benefits with no ability to control the employer-paid portion of the cost or to switch to alternative benefit delivery arrangements. Moreover, the continuing high level of medical inflation coupled with various economic factors, and global competition, raises the question whether any contractor could risk the adverse effects of providing any level of nonforfeitable benefits. The argument has been made that the only prudent way of providing some assurance that some level of benefit will be available in the future, is for a contractor to currently fund the accrued cost as permitted by existing procurement regulations. Many commenters did not believe the Board should proceed with this project.

Continuing Research

Subsequent to the publication of the ANPRM, the General Accounting Office (GAO) issued a report to the Chairman, Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, U.S. Senate, entitled "RETIREE HEALTH BENEFITS—Employer-Sponsored Benefits May Be Vulnerable to Further Erosion" (GAO-01-374) in May 2001. The GAO summarized its findings as follows:

Despite a sustained strong economy and several years of relatively low rates of increase in health insurance premiums, the decline in the availability of employer-sponsored retiree health benefits has not reversed since 1997—the last year for which we had reported previously—and several indicators suggest that there may be further erosion in these benefits. Employer benefit consultants we contacted generally indicated that retiree health benefits were continuing to decline. Two widely cited employer benefit surveys, however, provide conflicting data as to whether the proportion of employers sponsoring retiree health insurance remained stable or declined slightly from 1997 through 2000. In some cases, employers provide retiree health benefits to current retirees or long-term employees, but newly hired employees are not eligible. To date, however, the percentage of retirees with employer-sponsored coverage has remained relatively stable over the past several years, with about 37 percent of early retirees and 26 percent of Medicare-eligible retirees receiving retiree health coverage from a former employer. This stability may also be linked to employers' tendency to reduce coverage for future rather than current retirees. In some cases, employers that continue to offer retiree health benefits have reduced the terms of these benefits by increasing the share of premiums that retirees pay for health benefits, increasing co-payments and