



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS REGULATIONS BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

14111

[49 CFR Parts 173, 179]

[Docket No. HM-108]

SAFETY VENTS

-----Advance Notice of Proposed
Rule Making

Transportation of Hazardous Materials

The Hazardous Materials Regulations Board is considering amending parts 173 and 179 of the Department's hazardous materials regulations to require the use of safety relief valves in place of safety vents on tank cars used for transporting any corrosive liquids.

Frequently in train accidents, tank cars overturn and the hazardous commodities are released through the safety vents due to rupturing of the frangible discs. In some incidents, the entire tank content has been lost through the safety vents. This spillage of hazardous materials creates serious problems. During switching operations, acids, liquid caustic soda, and other corrosive liquids have splashed through ruptured safety vent discs and in some instances they have caused injuries to railroad employees. Contributing to this problem is poor maintenance of the rupture disc and the design of the safety vent assembly. It appears that the presently authorized safety vent disc is not capable of withstanding the lading surge pressures created by train handling and switching. These surges tend to induce flexing of the disc with resultant weakening and failure. For these reasons the Board is considering the use of safety valves or combination safety valve-vent devices of approved materials which will be resistant to deterioration by the lading in place of presently specified safety vents.

Interested persons are invited to submit information, particularly valve manufacturers and tank car builders, as to the merits of this proposal. Communications should identify the docket number and be submitted in duplicate to the Secretary, Hazardous Materials Regulations Board, Department of Transportation, Washington, D.C. 20590. Communications received on or before August 28, 1973, will be considered before publication of a notice of proposed rulemaking or before final action is taken following its publication. All comments received will be available for examination by interested persons at the Office of the Secretary, Hazardous Materials Regulations Board, room 6215F, Buzzards Point Building, Second and V Streets SW., Washington, D.C., both before and after the closing date for comments.

(Secs. 831-835 of title 18, United States Code, and sec. 9 of the Department of Transportation Act (49 U.S.C. 1657).)

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MAC E. ROGERS,
Board Member,
Federal Railroad Administration.

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