

REGULATION No. 107
(Buses and coaches)

Transmitted by the expert from the European Commission

SAFETY ON BOARD OF SLEEPING COACHES

Recently, the attention of the Commission's services has been drawn to a number of tragic road accidents involving sleeping coaches. By sleeping coaches, it is meant coaches built in compliance with the current UN/ECE legislation (Regulations 36, 52, 107 and 80) or EU Directive 2001/85/EC, where seats can be converted into berths by simple means.

The current international legislation does not include any specific provisions for such berths. However the national law of some Contracting parties to the 1958 (revised) Agreement, as well as the national law of some Member States of the European Union, currently permits the use of such seats which can be converted into berths.

In our opinion, it is perfectly possible for a manufacturer to apply for a type-approval in accordance with Regulation 80 for seats convertible into berths. No additional specific test would be required.

The European Commission has taken the view that safety-belts have to be fitted in all new coaches with respect to forward- and rearward facing seats and used where fitted when travelling seated within the Community. At this stage, it appears inconceivable that occupants will be required to use their safety-belt when lying on berths.

Therefore, the situation would appear to be problematic in the near future when the EU legislation will be enforced, without increasing the safety on board of sleeping coaches.

A few Member States of the European Union have taken measures in order to protect passengers lying on berths, in case of frontal impact. Nothing similar, to our knowledge, has been laid down with respect to their protection in the case of roll-over.

Here are a few examples of measures taken at national level:

- installation of end protectors; immediately behind the driver's seat, behind the windscreen, behind stair cases, etc., to prevent passengers being thrown forward in the event of hard breaking or a collision;
- installation of a safety partition of specified dimensions in front of each berth ;
- withstand tests to be performed on safety partitions under static load or under dynamic conditions.

The Commission services would like to know the opinion of the Contracting Parties regarding this issue and to receive, as soon as possible, a copy of the existing national provisions, before adopting a position on this issue.


