A second set of tests was conducted with a group of older subjects. Although the results of those tests may prove useful for other purposes, they did not prove valid and relevant to this notice from a quantitative standpoint. During one of the test runs, some of the subjects stepped on the seat cushions rather than fully utilizing the passageway. In subsequent runs, this practice became widespread, making the results of those runs invalid for quantitative comparative purposes. Nevertheless, the second series of tests did not suggest any inaccuracies in the conclusions reached from the results of the first tests. Although the egress times were generally slower, the qualitative evaluation showed that the relative merits of the various passageway widths and offsets would be similar with older test subjects. This is to be expected with 13 or 20 inch passageways because, generally speaking, the constraining factor is the rate at which the subjects pass through the exit, rather than the rate at which they progress through the passageway to the exit.

The preamble to Amendment 25–76 also described a series of evacuation tests conducted in the United Kingdom and generally referred to as the "competitive tests." Although providing more space adjacent to an exit would intuitively seem to improve the evacuation flow rate, the competitive tests showed that providing more space does not always improve the flow rate and may, in some instances, actually prove to be counterproductive. This is primarily because evacuees sometimes form multiple files when additional space is available and compete for access to the exit rather than pass through it in one orderly file. The recent CAMI tests are consistent with the competitive tests in that a 13-inch passageway was shown to provide an egress capability as good as that provided by a 20-inch passageway.

In view of the results of the recent CAMI tests, the FAA determined that an unobstructed passageway 13 inches wide, with its centerline offset no more than 6¹/₂ inches from the centerline of the exit, provides a level of safety equal to that provided by the 20-inch passageway specified in § 25.813(c)(1)(i). Had data from those tests been available prior to the adoption of Amendment 25–76, the FAA would have specified 13 inches minimum width and 61/2 inches maximum offset at that time. Nevertheless, a 13-inch passageway with its centerline offset no more than 61/2 inches from that of the exit is presently acceptable under the equivalent level of safety provisions of

§ 21.21(b)(1) in lieu of a 20-inch passageway. In order to obviate the need to make separate findings of equivalent safety for each applicant, § 25.813(c)(1)(i) would be amended to specify 13 inches minimum width and a maximum centerline offset of $6^{1/2}$ inches for rows with three seats.

None of the recent CAMI testing involved interior configurations with two-seat rows on the exit side of the aisle; therefore, no change to the requirement for an unobstructed 10 inch wide passageway for those configurations is proposed. It may be noted, however, that the maximum centerline offset of 5 inches, as presently specified in § 25.813(c)(1)(i) for two-seat rows does correspond to 10 inches encroachment. As described above, an encroachment of 10 inches was found satisfactory in the recent CAMI tests with three-seat rows.

By letter dated October 5, 1992, Joseph D. Vreeman, Vice-President, Engineering, Maintenance and Material, Air Transport Association of America (ATA), petitioned for rulemaking to amend §§ 25.813 and 121.310. The ATA petitioned on behalf of its member airlines and similarly situated part 121 operators.

A summary of the petition was published for public comment in the **Federal Register** (57 FR 54346, November 18, 1992). Of the three commenters that responded, two support the action proposed by the petitioner. The third commenter generally supports the proposed action, but takes issue with certain portions of the proposal.

Like the change proposed in this notice, the ATA proposes to change § 25.813(c)(1)(i) to specify a minimum passageway width of 13 inches for three-seat rows. The ATA proposal does, however, differ in that it would permit a maximum centerline offset of 10 inches rather than $6^{1/2}$ inches as specified in this notice. One of the three commenters does not concur with the maximum centerline offset proposed by the petitioner.

It appears that the ATA may have intended to refer to 10 inches of encroachment instead of 10 inches of centerline offset, since it cites the same CAMI test series as the basis for its proposal. As noted above, a centerline offset of $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches corresponds to an encroachment of 10 inches for a passageway 13 inches wide. As also noted above, the tests were only conducted with centerline offsets of $6\frac{1}{2}$ and $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Since the testing with a centerline offset of $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches resulted in a significant degradation of egress capability and there was no other testing with an offset greater than $6^{1/2}$ inches, none of the CAMI tests support a maximum centerline offset of 10 inches as proposed by the ATA.

The ATA also proposes to amend § 25.813(c)(iii) to state that the placard must show the hatch weight, as specified by the original equipment manufacturer. The ATA believes that, by not specifying who must determine the weight of the hatch, current § 25.813(c)(iii) could result in different hatch weights being displayed on the same model airplanes. The ATA further believes that differing weight placards will ultimately cause confusion for the traveling public and create standardization problems for inspectors and flight attendants.

The FAA does not concur that there is any need to specify that only the original manufacturer's hatch weight data may be used. It is highly unlikely that any passenger will remember the exact hatch weight specified in the placard in one airplane and compare it with the weight specified in the placard of another airplane, let alone be confused by any differences. The purpose of the placard is not to advise the exact weight of the hatch per se, but to simply alert adjacent passengers to the fact that the hatch is likely to be much heavier than the passengers would otherwise expect. Operators are therefore permitted to use any reasonable means, including use of manufacturers' data, to determine the weight of the hatches.

The ATA proposes to amend §121.310(f)(3)(iii) to replace the present compliance date of December 3, 1992, with a phased schedule of 50% fleet compliance by December 3, 1993, and 100% by December 3, 1994. Present §121.310(f)(3)(v) already enables the FAA to grant relief to an individual operator from the December 3, 1992, compliance date if the FAA determines that special circumstances make compliance by that date impractical for that operator. In light of this existing provision, the ATA proposal would, in effect, simply relieve an operator from the burden of showing credible reasons why compliance could not be achieved earlier. One of the three commenters does not concur with the compliance schedule proposed by the petitioner. The FAA does not consider the proposed change to be appropriate because it would result, in some instances, in unjustified delays in achieving compliance.

As described earlier, § 121.310(f)(3)(iv) permits the FAA to authorize deviation from full compliance when special circumstances exist. These include, but are not limited