policy to consider a variety of factors in determining whether to take enforcement action against persons, including small entities, who have violated the safety laws and regulations. In addition to the seriousness of the violation and the person's history of compliance, FRA inspectors consider "such other factors as the immediate circumstances make relevant." In the context of violations by small entities, those factors include whether the violations were made in good faith (*e.g.*, based on an honest misunderstanding of the law), and whether the small entity has moved quickly and thoroughly to remedy the violation(s). In general, the presence of both good faith and prompt remedial action militates against taking a civil penalty action, especially if the violations are isolated events. On the other hand, violations involving willful actions and/or posing serious health, safety, or environmental threats should ordinarily result in enforcement actions, regardless of the entity's size.

Once FRA has assessed a civil penalty, it is authorized to adjust or compromise the initial penalty claims based on a wide variety of mitigating factors, unless FRA must terminate the claim for some reason. FRA has the discretion to reduce the penalty as it deems fit, but not below the statutory minimums. The mitigating criteria FRA evaluates are found in the railroad safety statutes and SBREFA: The severity of the safety or health risk presented; the existence of alternative methods of eliminating the safety hazard; the entity's culpability; the entity's compliance history; the entity's ability to pay the assessment; the impacts an assessment might exact on the entity's continued business; and evidence that the entity acted in good faith. FRA staff attorneys regularly invite small entities to present any information related to these factors, and reduce civil penalty assessments based on the value and integrity of the information presented. Staff attorneys conduct conference calls or meet with small entities to discuss pending violations, and explain FRA's view on the merits of any defenses or mitigating factors presented that may have resulted or failed to result in penalty reductions. Among the "other factors" FRA considers at this stage is the promptness and thoroughness of the entity's remedial action to correct the violations and prevent a recurrence. Small entities should be sure to address these factors in communications with FRA concerning civil penalty cases. Long-term solutions to compliance problems will be given great weight in FRA's determinations of a final settlement offer.

Finally, under FRA's Safety Assurance and Compliance Program (SACP), FRA identifies systemic safety hazards that continue to occur in a carrier or shipper operation, and in cooperation with the subject business, develops an improvement plan to eliminate those safety concerns. Often, the plan provides small entities with a reasonable time frame in which to make improvements without the threat of civil penalty. If FRA determines that the entity has failed to comply with the improvement plan, however, enforcement action is initiated.

FRA's small entity enforcement policy is flexible and comprehensive. FRA's first priority in its compliance and enforcement activities is public and employee safety. However, FRA is committed to obtaining compliance and enhancing safety with reasoned, fair methods that do not inflict undue hardship on small entities.

[68 FR 24894, May 9, 2003]

PART 210—RAILROAD NOISE EMISSION COMPLIANCE REGULATIONS

Subpart A—General Provisions

Subpart B—Inspection and Testing

AUTHORITY: Sec. 17, Pub. L. 92–574, 86 Stat. 1234 (42 U.S.C. 4916); sec. 1.49(o) of the regulations of the Office of the Secretary of Transportation, 49 CFR 1.49(o).

SOURCE: 48 FR 56758, Dec. 23, 1983, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General Provisions

§210.1 Scope of part.

This part prescribes minimum compliance regulations for enforcement of the Railroad Noise Emission Standards established by the Environmental Protection Agency in 40 CFR part 201.

§210.3 Applicability.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, the provisions of this part apply to the total sound emitted by moving rail cars and locomotives (including the sound produced by refrigeration and air conditioning units that are an integral element of such equipment), active retarders, switcher locomotives, car coupling operations, and load cell test stands, operated by a railroad as defined in 45 U.S.C. 22, under the conditions described in this part and in 40 CFR part 201.

(b) The provisions of this part do not apply to—

(1) Steam locomotives;

(2) Street, suburban, or interurban electric railways unless operated as a part of the general railroad system of transportation;

(3) Sound emitted by warning devices, such as horns, whistles, or bells when operated for the purpose of safety;

(4) Special purpose equipment that may be located on or operated from rail cars;

(5) As prescribed in 40 CFR 201.10, the provisions of 40 CFR 201.11 (a) and (b) and (c) do not apply to gas turbinepowered locomotives or any locomotive type that cannot be connected by any standard method to a load cell; or

(6) Inert retarders.

[48 FR 56758, Dec. 23, 1983, as amended at 54 FR 33228, Aug. 14, 1989]

§210.5 Definitions.

(a) *Statutory definitions.* All terms used in this part and defined in the Noise Control Act of 1972 (42 U.S.C. 4901 *et seq.*) have the definition set forth in that Act.

(b) *Definitions in standards.* All terms used in this part and defined in §201.1 of the Railroad Noise Emission Standards, 40 CFR 201.1, have the definition set forth in that section.

(c) *Additional definitions.* As used in this part—

Administrator means the Federal Railroad Administrator, the Deputy Administrator, or any official of FRA to whom the Administrator has delegated authority to act in the Administrator's stead.

Consist of a locomotive and rail cars means one or more locomotives coupled to a rail car or rail cars.

FRA means the Federal Railroad Administration.

Inert retarder means a device or system for holding a classified cut of cars and preventing it from rolling out the bottom of a railyard.

Inspector means FRA inspectors or FRA specialists.

Noise defective means the condition in which railroad equipment is found to exceed the Railroad Noise Emission Standards, 40 CFR part 201.

Railroad equipment means rail cars, locomotives, active retarders, and load cell test stands.

Standards means the Railroad Noise Emission Standards, 40 CFR part 201. (See appendix A in this part for a listing.)

§210.7 Responsibility for noise defective railroad equipment.

Any railroad that uses railroad equipment that is noise defective or engages in a car coupling operating that results in excessive noise according to the criteria established in this part and in the Standards is responsible for compliance with this part. Subject to §210.9, such railroad shall—

(a) Correct the noise defect;

(b) Remove the noise defective railroad equipment from service; or

(c) Modify the car coupling procedure to bring it within the prescribed noise limits.

§210.9 Movement of a noise defective locomotive, rail car, or consist of a locomotive and rail cars.

A locomotive, rail car, or consist of a locomotive and rail cars that is noise defective may be moved no farther than the nearest forward facility where the noise defective conditions can be eliminated only after the locomotive,