

U.S. Department of Transportation news:



Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

CONSUMER ADVISORY

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
June 13, 1980

NHTSA -- 54-80 (Reiley)
Tel. 202-426-9550

"HOTLINE" FOR DEAF
INITIATED BY DOT

Persons with impaired hearing now have an innovative system to make consumer inquiries about car problems, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced today.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is expanding its toll free Auto Safety Hotline, to accommodate the hard-of-hearing by means of teleprinter. After July 1, the hotline will be able to accommodate calls from Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, as well.

By using the teleprinter receiving and sending facilities available in libraries, public institutions serving the deaf and, in some instances, in their homes, the hearing-impaired can make direct inquiry to NHTSA.

Joan Claybrook, NHTSA administrator, said, "Since 1975, when our agency's free 'hotline' was inaugurated, NHTSA has processed tens of thousands of calls annually from consumers reporting motor vehicle safety defects and information requests about recalls and safety investigations. This new service makes this vital information available to thousands of individuals who could not use it until today."

The inaugural call on the teleprinter circuit reserved for the hard-of-hearing was initiated at Gallaudet College, a District of Columbia institution that specializes in education of the deaf.

The service opening honored the memory of Bernard M. Ames, a deceased NHTSA employee, who was interested in the problems of the hearing-impaired because of personal experience with two of his sons.

- more -

"Bernard Ames was sensitive to the problems of those affected by a hearing loss," Claybrook said. "He was especially concerned about their security as drivers and pedestrians, and before his untimely death he wrote a NHTSA booklet, 'Tips on Car Care and Safety for Deaf Drivers,' to encourage their practice of highway safety." Ames' widow, Mrs. Patricia Ames, of Fallston, Md., and the couple's four children, participated in the "hotline" inaugural ceremony.

As a result of a "hotline" call, NHTSA will mail information concerning recall campaigns when the make, model and model year of a vehicle is provided. Or if a person wants to report a problem, a pre-addressed, postage-paid questionnaire will be mailed. When the questionnaire is received by the agency, a copy will be forwarded to the vehicle manufacturer requesting assistance in resolving the problem. Other motor vehicle related information is available as well.

"Hotline" telecommunications numbers exclusively for the hearing impaired are:

Toll free, outside of Washington, D.C....800-424-9153.
In the District of Columbia...755-8919.

The regular "Hotline" telephone numbers for the public at large are:

Toll free, outside of Washington, D.C....800-424-9393.
In the District of Columbia....426-0123.

#####

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY
ADMINISTRATION
Washington, D.C. 20590
Official Business
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC
SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

DOT 517

FIRST CLASS

