



parts return program

news

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION • NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

Vol. 2, No. 1

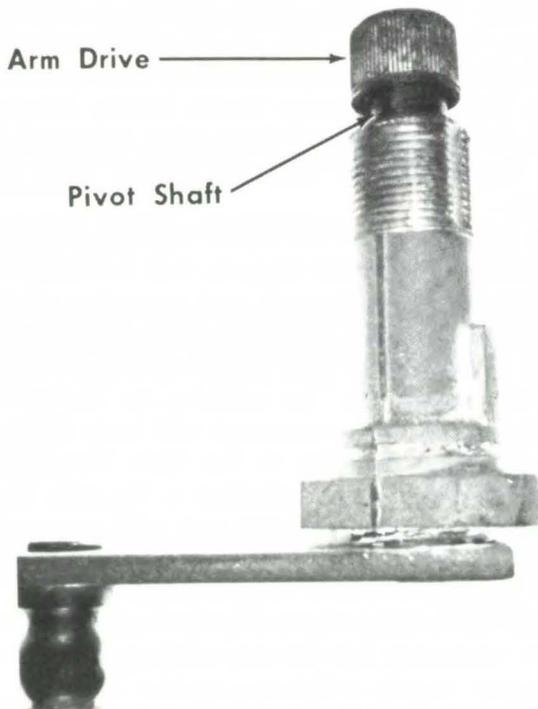
July, 1976

CASE OF THE MONTH

Defective Windshield Wipers on 1971-1973 Mercury Capris

On December 30, 1975, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) directed the Ford Motor Company to recall an estimated 185,000 Capri automobiles because of a safety-related defect in the windshield wipers of those vehicles. Information gathered during a defect investigation had shown a tendency for the wiper arm and blade to fly off the pivot assembly without warning. The defect was traced to 1971 and 1972 Capris, and 1973 models built through November 1972.

The defect involves the wiper pivot shaft assembly (see photo) which extends through the windshield cowl panel, and drives the wiper arm



Defective windshield wiper found on 1971-1973 Mercury Capris automobiles.

and blade across the windshield. The end of the pivot shaft above the windshield cowl is splined, or serrated, and press fitted into the bore of the arm drive. On some 1972 and 1973 models, the pivot shaft also is staked. The wiper arm and blade assembly fits onto the arm drive. When failure by separation of the wiper linkage occurs, the arm and blade assembly often flies off completely as the arm drive separates from the pivot shaft, denoting failure of the interference fit. The pivot shaft splines usually show evidence of severe wear when this type of failure occurs.

The cars have not been recalled to date, as the NHTSA's directive is being contested in the Federal Courts. We are still actively seeking these failed parts for study. One wiper pivot assembly has been submitted by Tim's Import Sales and Service in Hutchinson, Kansas. If any of our Parts Return Program participants know of or encounter other Capri wiper failures, please let us know. Just place the failed parts in one of your return mailbags and send them to us. Thanks!

GM TO RECALL AND PAY CIVIL PENALTY

The Federal Government and General Motors Corp. have settled a suit concerning a possible throttle jamming problem resulting from engine mount failure in certain GM passenger cars.

Under terms of the settlement, and with the consent of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, General Motors has agreed to recall model years 1965 and 1967 Buick Wildcats and Electra 225s, and early production 1970 Cadillacs with cruise control (except Eldorados). There are 209,562 vehicles involved.

The government said that these vehicles, are subject to engine mount failure which may result in sudden throttle jamming and loss of vehicle control, thus creating an unreasonable risk of accident, injury, or death. For owners who respond to the

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recall notices, General Motors will correct, free of charge, this hazardous condition. General Motors also will pay the government a civil penalty of \$95,000.

In December of 1974, the administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) determined that a safety defect existed in model years 1965 through 1968 Buick Wildcats and Electras 225s and early production model year 1970 Cadillacs with cruise control (except Eldorados).

The Administrator ordered General Motors to issue defect notifications to the owners of the vehicles, but in January 1975, GM initially refused to comply with the order. The government then filed suit against the company and GM sued the government, contesting the order to issue defect notifications.

Special thanks to those Parts Return Program shops that submitted failed engine mounts and information related to this case.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

- Mr. Richard Poyourow of RICHARD'S AUTOMOTIVE, Los Angeles, California, described a condition he experienced in his 1971 Audi model 100LS. The battery, which is located under rear seat, was charged in excess of sixteen volts. This condition was reportedly caused by a faulty voltage regulator which allowed the alternator to over charge the battery. The battery acid boiled as a result, reportedly releasing explosive vapors into the passenger compartment. Mr. Poyourow reported that both he and his wife suffered irritation of the nose and throat as a result of these vapors.
- Mr. Robert Chester of BOB CHESTER'S AUTO SERVICE in Arlington, Texas, sent in pictures of a 1974 Ford E100 van which had 11,500 miles on it. The left axle tube reportedly separated from the center section of the axle as a result of an insufficient weld. Once the condition was diagnosed, the vehicle was taken to a Ford dealer. Mr. Chester reported that the service manager at the dealership has seen approximately 12 vehicles in the past year with similar failures. However, the majority of these vehicles were reportedly the Ford Elite model.

Mr. Chester also reported that he finds that most failed GM alternators equipped with internal regulators have either a faulty voltage regulator or a burned out isolation diode (see April 1976 newsletter). He believes that these failures may be caused by over capacity charging, such as

running an engine while using jumper cables, or a failing battery which will cause a constant over-charge rate.

- The PRP has received a master cylinder that was removed from a 1970 Chevelle Malibu, which had 47,902 miles on it. The master cylinder reportedly failed when the brakes were applied at a speed of 35 miles per hour. The failure resulted in a two car collision. Mr. John H. Castoe of CASTOE AUTO SERVICE AND ENGINEERING in Tujunga, California reports that the brakes had been checked on the morning of the accident and were found to be in good condition. Mr. Castoe supplied photographs of the Chevelle which sustained \$850.00 in damages. Cost of repairs to the second vehicle was not known at the time the master cylinder was submitted.
- Mr. John Gartner of J. GARTNER AUTO SERVICE, Chicago Illinois, reports that many of his customers who use Uniroyal, Firestone, Goodyear, B. F. Goodrich, and General brand steel radial tires have had tire failure as a result of ply separation.
- Mr. Pritzelwitz of PRITZ'S FOREIGN CARS OF COLORADO in Colorado Springs reports finding a 1975 Honda Civic with a broken seat frame (driver's side). The driver reportedly weighed approximately 160 pounds.

DOT TO OPEN NEW TEST FACILITY

Testing of motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment for possible safety defects is scheduled to begin this fall at a new engineering test facility operated by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has begun staffing the facility, located at the Ohio Transportation Research Center near East Liberty.

The initial staff of 11, which includes engineers, technicians and clerical support, will be engaged in checking testing equipment and preparing operating procedures. The engineering test facility plans to add 15 to its staff later this year, and maximum staff may reach 56. In addition to leasing the building space, the government will have access to other excellent facilities at the Ohio Transportation Research Center, including a 7½-mile high-speed track, a 2,500-foot skid pad with approaches and return loops, a 50-acre vehicle dynamics area, and a high acceleration crash simulator.

While the work performed at the engineering test facility primarily will involve testing of motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment for possible safety defects, other work, such as compliance testing, also will be performed as time permits.

OUTSTANDING SHOPS

Our outstanding shops are those shops that have sent into the PRP at least one part during the current month. A shop that sends in parts in consecutive months is identified by a number in parenthesis before the name. This number identifies the consecutive months the shop has sent in a part. New shops that have just become active in the PRP are identified with an asterisk before their name. During July 1976, nine shops became active participants in the PRP. Four shops have sent in failed parts in consecutive months.

REGION 0

- (3) HARRY'S AUTO SERVICE
Great Barrington, Massachusetts
- * PALMER'S SPRING COMPANY
Providence, Rhode Island

REGION 1

- BILL SCHMIDT'S GARAGE
Etna, Pennsylvania
- * BOB MASON SUNOCO SERVICE CENTER
East Greenbush, New York
- CRANE AUTO REPAIR
Bricktown, New Jersey
- * COCHRAN EQUIPMENT COMPANY
Middletown, Delaware
- FRANK'S SUNOCO
Wilmington, Delaware
- (2) KOLESNIK'S SERVICE STATION
Rochester, New York
- (2) LONGBARD'S EXXON STATION
Poughkeepsie, New York
- W AND S SERVICE, INCORPORATED
Wilmington, Delaware

REGION 2

AUTO BRAKE CORPORATION
Norfolk, Virginia

REGION 4

- * AC BRAKE COMPANY, INCORPORATED
Louisville, Kentucky
- AKRON WHEEL ALIGNMENT
Akron, Ohio

REGION 5

- * KATON'S GARAGE
Lead, South Dakota

REGION 6

- (10) DICK JORDAN STANDARD SERVICE STATION
Clayton, Missouri
- J. GARTNER AUTO SERVICE
Chicago, Illinois

REGION 7

BOB CHESTER'S AUTO SERVICE
Arlington, Texas

REGION 8

- * PRITZ'S FOREIGN CARS OF COLORADO
Colorado Springs, Colorado

REGION 9

- B. G. TANZIER'S AUTO REBUILD
Bellevue, Washington
- * GUS COOPER SERVICES, INCORPORATED
Seattle, Washington
- * L. A. D. AUTO ELECTRIC
Spokane, Washington

REGION 9A

- * CASTOE AUTO SERVICE AND ENGINEERING
Tujunga, California
- KALLEN'S GARAGE
Van Nuys, California
- RICHARD'S AUTOMOTIVE
Los Angeles, California
- WERK BROTHER'S GARAGE
Pasadena, California

NOTE: We need more participating shops. If you know of an independent automotive repair facility in your area who you think might want to help out in this Program, please send their name and address to us. Thanks.

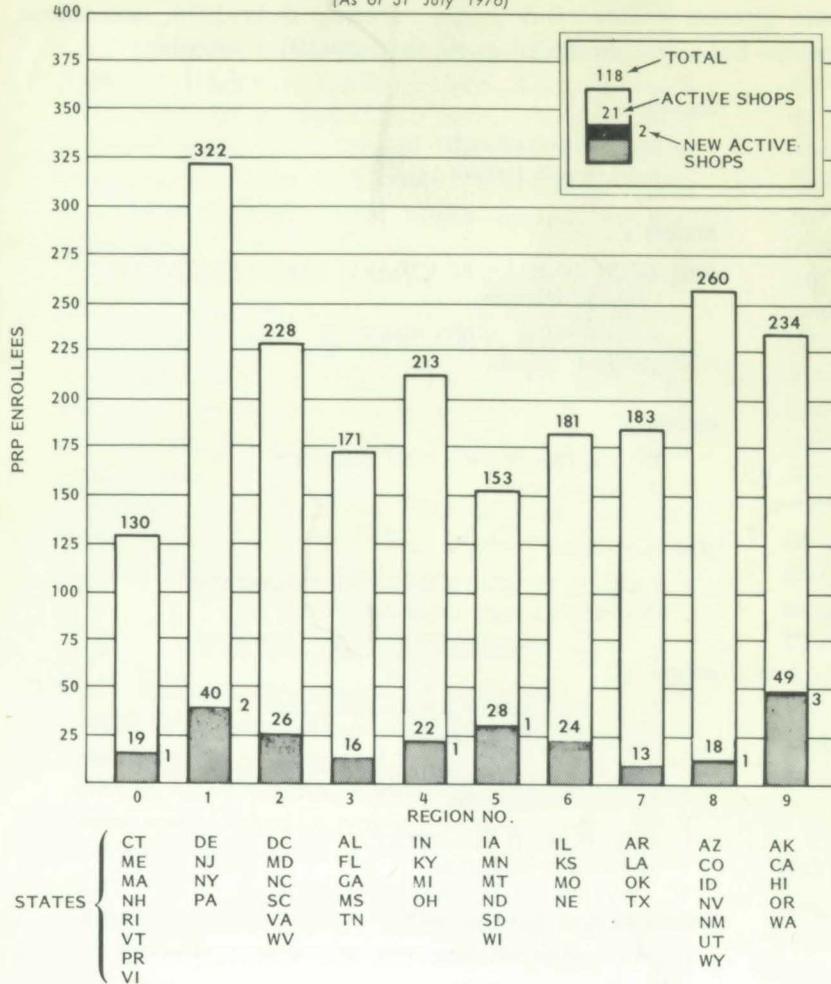
TELEPHONE CALLS

If you have any problems regarding this program, are in need of additional mailbags, tags, etc., have any questions which need answers, or would like to pass on comments, please call us collect. Place your call to Bruce Beddow, Jonni Peizer, or Guy Whiddon at (703) 527-4500. We are Eastern Time and are normally available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. If you have a contribution or suggestion for the *PRP News*, please send it to Kappa Systems, Inc., 1501 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22209, Attention: Bruce E. Beddow.

CURRENT PRP PARTICIPATION

The graph below identifies the total number of active shops within each region for last year only. Two hundred forty-nine shops contributed parts last year. In addition, nine shops joined our active team and sent in a part, bringing the total number of active shops to two hundred fifty-five.

(As of 31 July 1976)



National Parts Return Program

Description and Function

- The PRP involves the voluntary submittal by independent repair shops of failed automotive components. Components are submitted to a representative (Kappa Systems, Inc.) of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).
 - The purpose of the PRP is to gather information on these components to help the NHTSA identify the existence of safety-related, manufacturing defects in design, materials, construction, or performance of motor vehicle equipment. Under the authority of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966, and Amendments to the Act of 1974, the NHTSA can require manufacturers to conduct safety defect notification campaigns when it has been determined that a defect relating to motor vehicle safety exists.
 - The information obtained from these parts is also valuable in preparing Federal motor vehicle safety standards.
- Your shop can help. The parts that you send in will give vital information that cannot be obtained in any other way.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

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