



parts return program

news

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

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POWER STEERING HOSE FAILS

The high pressure power steering hose that is shown was sent in by WINSLOW'S MOBILE STATION in Gorham, Maine. The hose was removed from a 1975 AMC Hornet Sportabout with a mileage of 35,070. As indicated in the photograph, a two inch section of the rubber surface on the hose has cracked and fallen off. This reportedly resulted in a loss of power steering. The NHTSA has received two other similar reports involving 1975 AMC Hornets. In those two cases engine compartment fires were reported as a result of hose deterioration and power steering fluid leakage. The NHTSA is analyzing the reports. If your shop knows of similar failures, the PRP would like to hear from you.

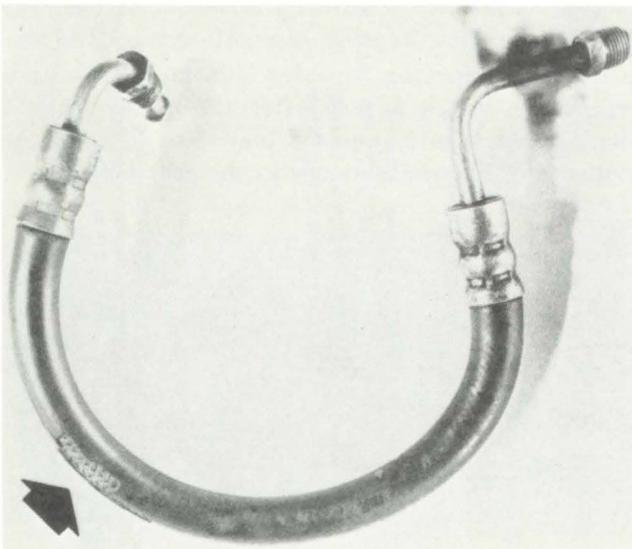


Figure 1

STEERING COLUMN FAILS

The photograph below shows a steering column, lower shaft assembly that was removed from a 1971 Ford Pinto. Vehicle mileage was 61,174. The assembly was sent to the PRP by ROEHL'S BEE LINE BRAKE and ALIGNMENT in Appleton, Wisconsin. The flexible portion of the shaft consists of twined metal wire covered by a rubber boot. In the area shown on the photograph some of the wire strands are unraveled and broken. The

failure reportedly resulted in complete loss of steering. There is no evidence of rust or corrosion. If your shop knows of any similar failures, the PRP would like to hear from you.

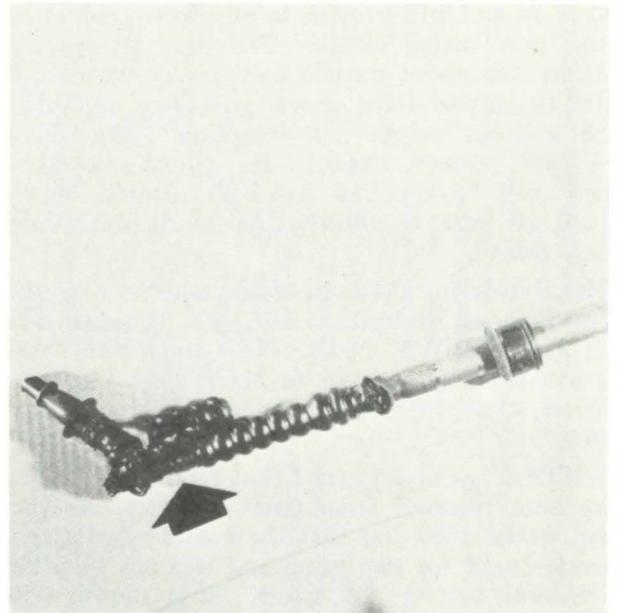


Figure 2

AUTO RAMPS FAILED NHTSA TESTS

Vehicle owners, mechanics and auto service personnel were warned in a federal Consumer Protection Bulletin recently that certain models of portable auto ramps—widely used to support motor vehicles during repair and maintenance operations—may collapse if used in accordance with their manufacturers' weight capacity ratings.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) tested 11 auto ramp models which represented the products of six different manufacturers. NHTSA identified four of these models which collapsed under their rated capacities.

All four ramp models failed the first of four tests conducted by the NHTSA on all of the models selected for testing. With a pair of selected ramps aligned in parallel on a level surface, the ramps failed to support a vehicle of axle weight matching

the model's rated capacity, when the vehicle was slowly driven on and off the ramps, 10 times.

Failing this test were the following models: Petersen Industries, Inc. ramp models of 30-2225 and 30-2010, rated at 5,000 pounds per pair and 4,000 pounds per pair, respectively; and Mark Fore-Vatco's models CR-1 and R-75, rated respectively at 7,000 and 6,500 pounds per ramp-pair.

Owners and users of these auto ramps should know that Petersen Industries has redesigned its ramps to provide a carrying capacity equal to their rated capacities under all conditions of NHTSA's test procedures, and has established a proper rating for earlier ramp models. New rating labels will be sent to all owners of both models cited, upon written request. The revised capacities for models 30-2225 and 30-2010 are 4,500 and 3,500 pounds per pair, respectively.

Mark Fore-Vatco has re-rated its models CR-1 and R-75 and will provide to all owners requesting them, new rating labels. The new ratings will indicate the above models may safely be used, in pairs, to support front or rear axle loads of vehicles with a gross weight not exceeding 7,000 pounds and 6,500 pounds, respectively. Since new rating labels will be supplied for both models, owners should be sure to specify the Mark Fore-Vatco model owned.

New labels for Petersen ramps may be requested from Petersen Industries, Inc., 400 Wheeler Avenue, Fredonia, Wis., 53021. New Mark Fore labels are available by writing to Mark Fore-Vatco Industries, 109 Brookline Avenue, Boston, Mass., 02215.

NHTSA has also warned that reports of failures have been received from users of Sears, Roebuck ramp model 1230, but that the model has not been manufactured for two years and was not subjected to federal testing. A Sears ramp model 1232, which is nearly identical except for the addition of two horizontal braces, has passed NHTSA testing, however. Inquiry with respect to model 1230 is continuing with the manufacturer—Kar Rite Corporation—to determine whether or not this discontinued model was defective as manufactured.

Manufacturers do not always make clear whether the rated ramp capacity, as printed on ramp cartons or paste-on stickers, refers to a single ramp, a pair of ramps, to a single axle weight or to gross vehicle weight. The user should always assume that ramp ratings refer to ramp pairs, and should take special care to note whether the rating refers to axle weight or gross vehicle weight. When in doubt, assume the rating refers to gross vehicle weight.

NHTSA offers the following rules for safe use of portable auto ramps:

1. Know the load to be supported and the ramps' capacity. **DO NOT OVERLOAD.**
2. Use auto ramps only in pairs.

3. Use only on level paved surfaces; avoid glazed surfaces.
4. Position ramps parallel to vehicle's direction, spaced so vehicle tires will travel the center of both ramp channels.
5. Keep bystanders clear of ramps when driving on or off of ramps.
6. Drive on or off ramps slowly.
7. While vehicle is positioned on ramps for service or repair, transmission should be in "Park" gear and the parking brakes set.
8. Wheels remaining on pavement should be blocked against any movement, forward or backward.

We are interested in hearing from ramp owners or users who may have experienced an auto ramp failure, collapse, etc. Such reports should include the identity of the ramp manufacturer, ramp model number, type of vehicle involved, date of ramp purchase, and the consequences of the failure.

POWER STEERING GEAR CRACKS

BEACON AUTO BODY in Pennsauken, New Jersey sent in the power steering gear that is shown. The gear was removed from a 1976 Oldsmobile Delta Royals with mileage of 7,413. As indicated in the photograph, the end of the gear housing is cracked. The crack extends about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the way around the gear housing circumference. The end plate and snap ring are also shown. The vehicle reportedly struck a pole after the owner made a sharp right turn to avoid a bicyclist. There is no evidence of external damage to the gear housing.

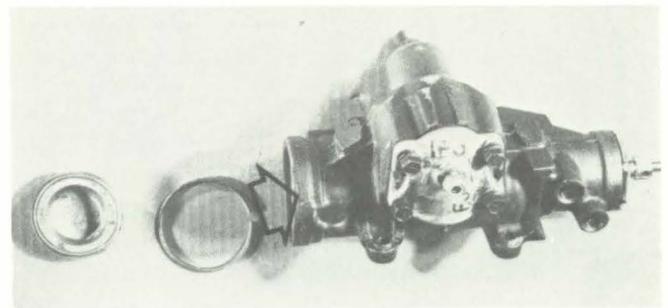


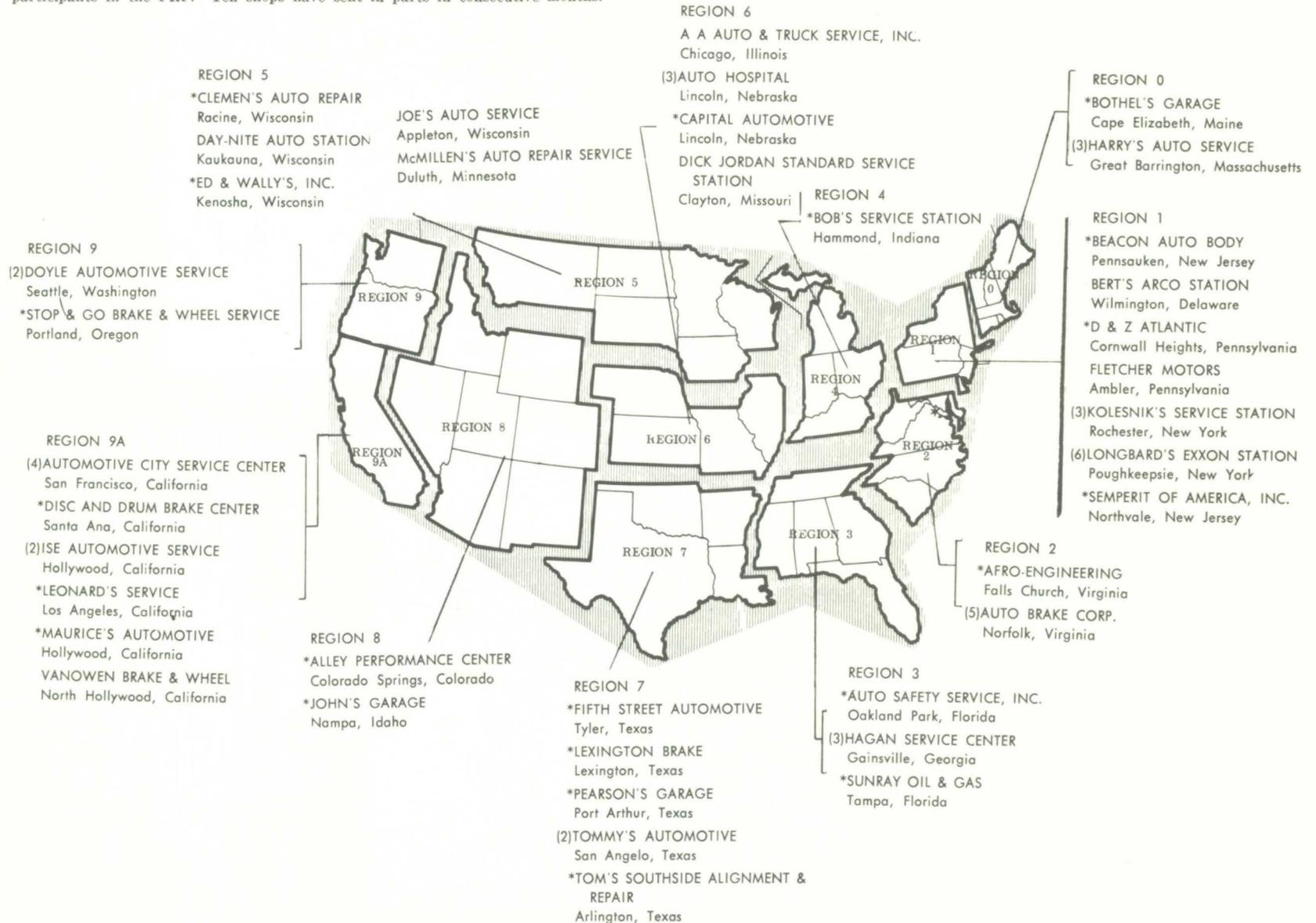
Figure 3

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. Call Bruce Beddow, Jonni Peizer, or Guy Whiddon at (703) 527-4500, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Likewise, 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.

Our outstanding shops are those shops that have sent into the PRP at least one part during the current month. The number in parenthesis before a shop's name identifies the number of 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 November 1976, twenty-one shops became new active participants in the PRP. Ten shops have sent in parts in consecutive months.

OUTSTANDING SHOPS



ITEMS OF INTEREST

- The PRP is interested in obtaining specific information on failed, rebuilt automotive parts. Items such as brake master cylinders, wheel cylinders, and shoes that are improperly rebuilt and give unsatisfactory performance are of particular interest. Shops which encounter such components are asked to call or write to the PRP and describe the failure. Be sure to include the name and address of the company which rebuilt the component, as well as the component mileage at the time of failure.
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has proposed a change in the requirements of current federal vehicle-in-use inspection standards. The proposed amendment would authorize the use of resilient spacers in the springs of an automobile to raise it to the height necessary to pass state inspection. Most states which carry out motor vehicle inspection programs utilize federal safety standards. These standards require owners to install new springs, rather than spacers, when the old springs are unable to maintain the vehicle at the proper height. It has been estimated that the cost of new springs is considerably more than the cost of using spring spacers.
- The NHTSA announced it is conducting an investigation of the "Firestone 500 Steel Belt radial" tires. It said it was advising owners of the radial tires to inspect them immediately for any signs of tread separation, or for any bulges or other irregularities in the tire's configuration. Tires exhibiting such evidence should no longer be used.

The NHTSA said that withdrawal of a suit against Firestone in the case of the bias ply tires does not in any way affect the ongoing investigation of the "Firestone 500 Steel Belt radial tire."

Owners who have experienced radial tire damage or failure, or who have observed irregularities in the tire's configuration are asked to provide a full description of the problem. They should also provide the manufacturer's name, tire size, the DOT identification number (which is located on the sidewall of the tire), the model and year of the vehicle, the identity of the vendor of the tire and the estimated mileage of the suspect tires.

J. GARTNER'S AUTO SERVICE in Chicago, Illinois has reported some problems with Firestone 500 Steel Belt radial tires. The shop reports experiencing several cases of tread separation at low mileage, and instances where the tires caused vehicle steering to pull to one side.

- Mr. John Clover of JOHN'S GARAGE in Nampa, Idaho, reports repairing a 1966 Jeep Super Wagoneer where the steering box broke away from the frame causing loss of steering control. Reportedly, a defective frame bracket weld failed shortly after the driver of the vehicle had exited from a freeway. Since the bracket weld was repaired, no parts were available. Failure reports of this type, where parts are repaired or returned for refund or replacement, can be just as important. If your shop repairs a safety related defective part and can't return the items, describe the problem on a note and drop it in your next bag of parts.

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

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