



parts
return
program

news

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

Vol. 2, No. 4

October, 1976

COURT UPHOLDS RECALL OF 1968 & 1969 MUSTANGS AND COUGARS

Judicial support for the safety defect recall of an estimated 500,000 1968 and 1969 Mustangs and Cougars was gained recently in a ruling issued by the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

Judge George Hart upheld a recall order issued against the Ford Motor Co. more than a year ago by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The agency determined that a safety defect existed in the seat back pivot pin brackets of both front seats of the vehicles involved. Failure of the brackets can cause sudden partial collapse of the front seat backs, resulting in loss of vehicle control and possible accidents and injuries, according to NHTSA.

Ford's contention that the failures did not pose an unreasonable risk to the public, was rejected by Judge Hart who characterized the problem as a "severe threat to motor vehicle safety," which if uncorrected, could lead to accidents, injuries or fatalities in the future.

The testimony of more than 40 owners of the affected cars shows a record of some collisions and injuries as a result of seat back failures, the court said, and many cases of loss of control for periods of up to 30 seconds, at speeds ranging up to 60 miles per hour.

Ford's own testimony conceded that at least 11,000 such seat failures were reported during the initial warranty periods for the cars, and that the failures continued through 1975, Judge Hart stated. The manufacturer also had not contended that the pivot pin brackets were not continuing to fail or would not fail in the future.

Ford indicated that complying with the order would cost several millions of dollars, but it was not known whether the manufacturer will appeal the District Court ruling.

ELEVEN SHOPS TO RECEIVE AWARD

Eleven shops have been selected to receive a Certificate of Appreciation (Figure 1) from the Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for their outstanding participation in the Parts Return Program (PRP). This is the third year for which shops have been selected to receive the certificate. Shops were se-

lected this year according to the number of failed, safety-related automotive components which each has submitted to the PRP during the twelve month period ending June 1, 1976. Shops receiving the award this year are:

AUTO BRAKE CORPORATION
Norfolk, Virginia
AUTO HOSPITAL
Lincoln, Nebraska
BEREA AUTO SERVICE
Greenville, South Carolina
BERT'S ARCO STATION
Wilmington, Delaware
DICK JORDAN STANDARD SERVICE STATION
Clayton, Missouri
DOYLE AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE
Seattle, Washington
EUROPEAN MOTORS LTD.
Washington, D.C.
ISE AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE
Hollywood, California
KOLESNIK'S SERVICE STATION
Rochester, New York
PARK AUTO REPAIR
Chicago, Illinois
TIM'S IMPORT SALES AND SERVICE
Hutchinson, Kansas

We are especially proud of these shops and would like to extend our congratulations. Thank you for your efforts during the year.



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

Certificate of Appreciation

Awarded to

Auto Brake Corporation

FOR DEDICATED EFFORT TO IMPROVE AUTOMOTIVE SAFETY
THROUGH OUTSTANDING COOPERATION IN THE

PARTS RETURN PROGRAM

FOR THE YEARS 75-76

October 20, 1976
DATE

John W. Swain
ADMINISTRATOR

COLTS AND ARROWS RECALLED BY CHRYSLER

Chrysler Corporation is recalling 718 Dodge Colts and Plymouth Arrows because there is a possibility that the driveline dynamic vibration dampers are subject to failure as a result of design structural inadequacy. The damper support bracket is mounted to the transmission extension, and should the failure occur, the detached part could create a hazard to other vehicles if it were to land on the roadway. Vehicles affected by this recall are those 1976 models manufactured from April thru June, 1976, and equipped with 1600 CID engines and automatic transmissions. The correction involves replacing the existing damper with a previously used two-piece damper and will be made free of charge to the owner.

CRACKED CALIPER HOUSING

The PRP has received a disc brake caliper from a 1974 Ford Elite with 26,000 vehicle miles. As shown in Figure 2 the caliper housing is cracked

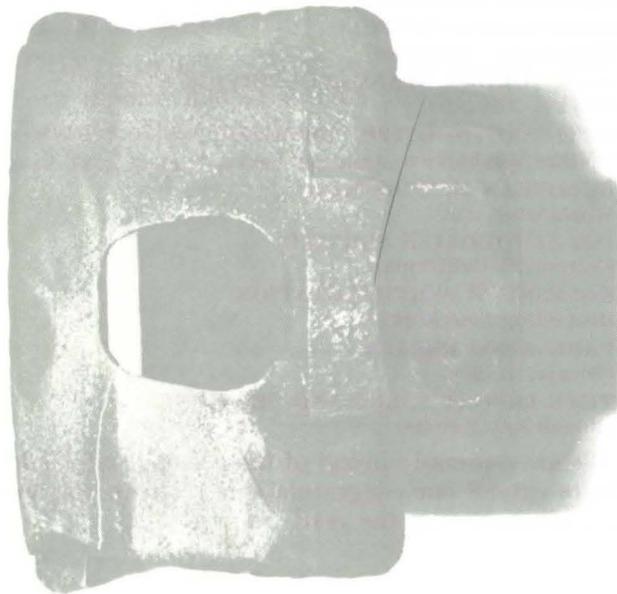


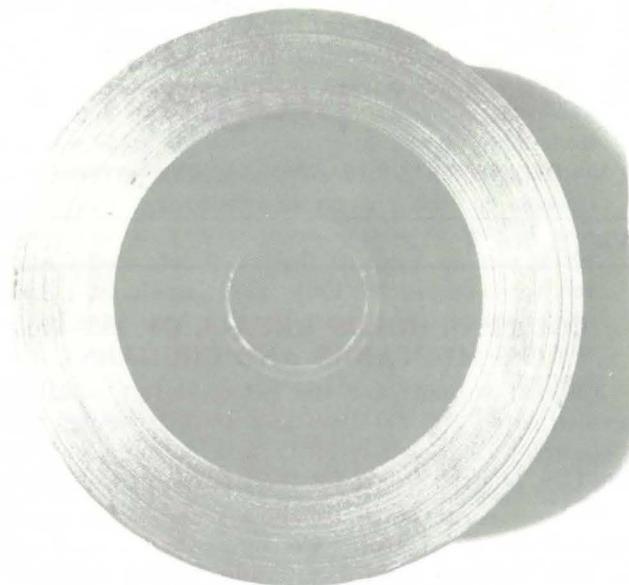
Figure 2

directly above the location of the inner pad. The 2½ inch long crack extends from the hole in the center of the housing to the outside edge and completely through the metal.

The brake rotor was also returned (Figure 3). The braking surface on the rotor has been scored by the worn pads. EVAN'S BRAKE SERVICE in Cleveland, Ohio submitted the failed parts.

The PRP has received many scored drums and rotors from shops as a result of the Wanted Poster in the PRP News of June, 1976. The scored rotor shown in Figure 3 is typical of those that have been received. The parts are now being reviewed for use in the NHTSA test program. The PRP

certainly appreciates this excellent response from our members. Keep up the good work, more parts are needed.



National Parts Return Program Description and Function

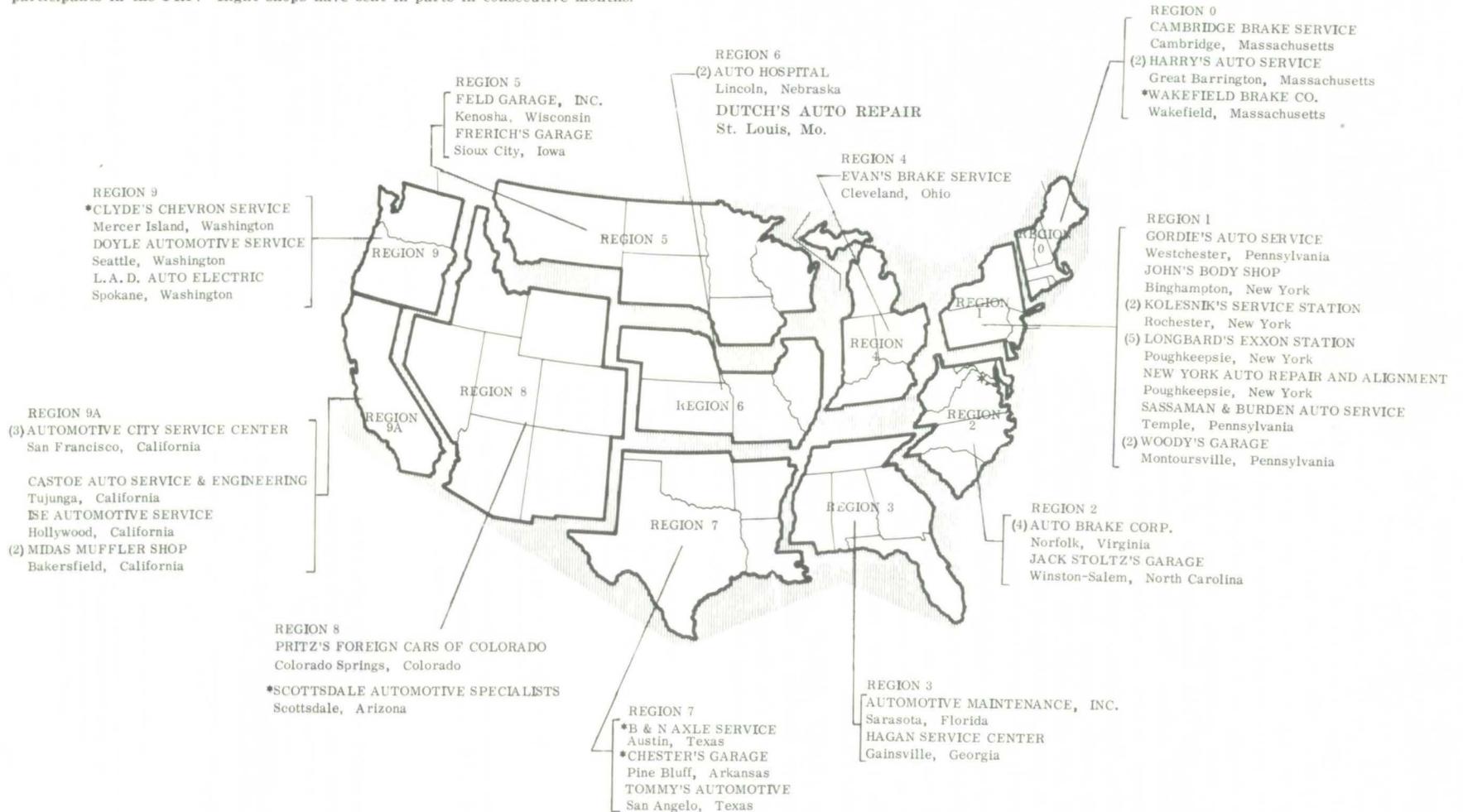
- The PRP involves the voluntary submittal of failed automotive components by independent repair shops. Components are submitted to a representative (Kappa Systems, Inc.) of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).
- The purpose of the PRP is to gather information on these components to help the NHTSA identify the existence of safety-related, manufacturing defects in motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment. Under the authority of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966, as amended, 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.

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. 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.

OUTSTANDING SHOPS

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 October 1976, five shops became new active participants in the PRP. Eight shops have sent in parts in consecutive months.



ITEMS OF INTEREST

- The PRP has received several comments from shops stating that the only failed parts they have received are those that we have covered in the newsletter or failures of which the PRP is already aware. We would like to take this opportunity to say that we are interested in any automotive parts which exhibit a safety-related defect in design, materials, construction, or performance, and particularly, those which support an ongoing NHTSA investigation of an alleged safety-related defect. The Defects Investigatory Cases Report, which is mailed to PRP members periodically, lists these open investigations. If your shop needs a copy, drop us a line and we will mail you one. If you are in doubt as to whether a part is safety-related, send it in and we will resolve the question here.
- The owner of a 1976 Harley-Davidson model FLH Electra-Glide has reported that the wind screen broke-off completely on two occasions while he was driving on an interstate highway. The PRP would like to hear from your shop if you know of a similar failure.
- JOHN'S BODY SHOP in Binghamton, New York reports finding a 1968 Buick and a 1970 Chevrolet where the chassis side frame rail was split near a rear wheel housing. This reportedly

caused excessive movement of the rear axle assembly and resulted in the loosening of the drive shaft.

- AUTO HOSPITAL in Lincoln, Nebraska, reports repairing a 1976 Cadillac ambulance where the power steering pump was mounted 1/2 inch from the exhaust manifold, causing excessive heat build-up in the pump and hoses. The shop also reports finding a 1975 and a 1976 Superior ambulance manufactured on a Cadillac chassis, where the rear suspension was over-loaded and could allow the fuel tank to drag on the pavement. In June, 1976, 1971-76 model Superior ambulances and funeral car bodies mounted on Cadillac chassis were recalled. The recall was for the possibility that the fuel-tank hanger strap restraining brackets may fail when subject to an unusual loading condition. Occurrence of the condition could result in loss of the fuel tank and result in a fire. Two such incidents occurred at the time of the recall.
- In response to an Item of Interest in the August issue of the PRP News, Mr. Pritzlewitz of PRITZ'S FOREIGN CARS, Colorado Springs, Colorado, reports that the Datsun owner's manual calls for a clutch fluid replacement every six months. Mr. Pritzlewitz states that the clutch sleeve and master cylinders will leak at the seals unless this maintenance is performed.

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

