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

Vol. 3, No. 8

March 1978

REMINDER

It has come to our attention that there may be some concern or reluctance on the part of some of our newly enrolled dealers to participate in our Parts Return Program (PRP) by submitting failed automotive components.

For example, the GMC Truck and Coach Division of General Motors Corporation requires that all parts, replaced under the terms of the warranty, be held for inspection by a factory representative in accordance with certain established procedures. In other cases dealers are required to return certain parts to the factory for warranty reimbursement. Additionally, some states and localities require that replaced parts and/or materials be made available to the owner at the time service repairs are paid for.

We want all of our members to know that the PRP has no intention of undermining or conflicting with any of the above kind of responsibilities that you may have. Perhaps our program would be better named the "Parts and Information Return Program". In any case, the above situations are exactly why we designed and provided all of our members with the new postage-paid Information Report form. As you know, it is a short and convenient way for you to report safety problems when parts are not available. Additionally, the PRP staff is readily available to receive information from you by telephone—*call collect* (703) 527-4500. The PRP canvas mailbag has been provided for situations where parts are available.

We trust that we can count on the important contributions that you can make to highway traffic safety.

17 SHOPS RECEIVE ADMINISTRATOR'S AWARD

Our independent PRP repair shops supplied information last year that aided 17 safety defect investigations, which resulted in four major safety recall campaigns. Two recall campaigns involved Ford Motor Company, while the other two involved Porsche and Firestone Tire and Rubber.

To express our thanks, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recently awarded Certificates of Appreciation to 17 shops for their strong support in the Parts Return Program over the past year.

In making the awards, NHTSA Administrator Joan Claybrook said, "the voluntary cooperation of participating shops demonstrates their genuine concern for improving automotive safety. The information received as a result of the Parts Return Program is crucial to our defects investigations."

Ten of the shops received Certificates of Appreciation for the first time:

Automotive City, San Francisco, California
Bob's Service Station, Hammond, Indiana
Tommy's Auto Repair, Sioux City, Iowa
McLain's Auto Repair, St. Louis, Missouri
Longbard's Exxon Station, Poughkeepsie, New York
May's Auto Service, Mansfield, Ohio
Harry's Auto Service, Great Barrington, Massachusetts
Woody's Garage, Montoursville, Pennsylvania
L.A.D. Auto Electric, Spokane, Washington
Joe's Auto Service, Appleton, Wisconsin

Seven firms, recipients of prior awards, on the award list again this year are:

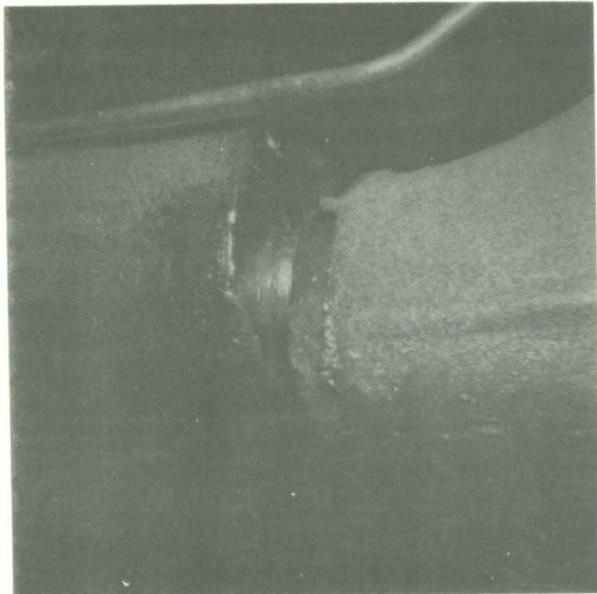
Hagan Service Center, Gainesville, Georgia
Ise Automotive Service, Hollywood, California
Auto Hospital, Lincoln, Nebraska
Kolesnik's Service Station, Rochester, New York
Auto Brake Corp., Norfolk, Virginia
Doyle Automotive Service, Seattle, Washington
Park Auto Repair, Racine, Wisconsin

FORD AXLE HOUSING WELD FAILURES

A number of reports have been received by the NHTSA involving axle shaft housing failures on 1974 through 1977 Ford Torinos. In one case, it was reported that the housing had cracked on a 1975 Ford Torino with 35,293 miles. In another instance, involving a 1974 Ford Gran Torino Station Wagon with 45,895 miles, it was reported that the weld between the differential housing and axle housing had broken, causing the axle to fall off. A third one described an identical broken weld on a 1975 Ford Torino that reportedly resulted in \$500 property damage.

These cases are similar to one reported in the July, 1976 *PRP News*. The component pictured here, was submitted by BOB CHESTER'S AUTO SERVICE of Arlington, Texas, and involved the left axle tube from a 1974 Ford E 100 van with 11,500 miles. The tube reportedly separated from the center section of the axle (differential housing) as a result of an insufficient weld.

The PRP is very interested in learning of other problems with axle welds, such as those described here. If you have observed such failures, please send the information to us immediately. Again, special thanks to Bob Chester's Auto Service.



Axle Tube to Differential
1974 Ford Van
BOB CHESTER'S AUTO SERVICE

TWO NEW INVESTIGATIONS

The NHTSA recently initiated two new safety defect investigations involving vehicles manufactured by the Ford Motor Co. One investigation involves breakage or separation of the manual transmission, floor-mounted gear shift levers in 1971-1978 Mercury Capris, and the other deals with malfunction of the power steering control valve in 1975-1977 Granadas and Mercury Monarchs.

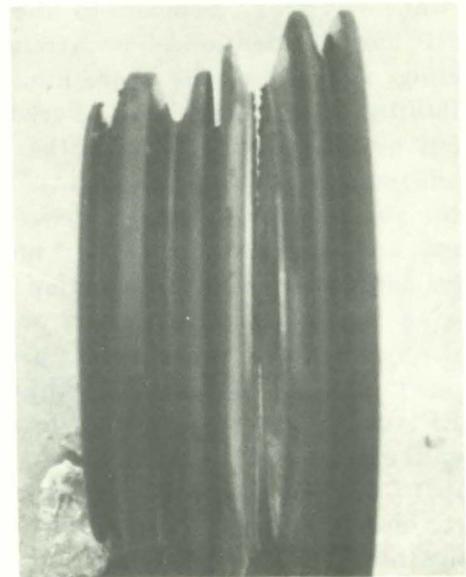
The gear shift investigation involves two separate types of manual transmission levers used in 350,000 Mercury Capris. Depending on the type used, the

(Continued on page 3)

CRANKSHAFT PULLEY SPLIT

The COUNTY OF DALLAS, Dallas, Texas, reported a problem on a 1977 Ford LTD equipped with the police package. The difficulty is in the original equipment crankshaft pulley. As shown in the photograph, the pulley has a $\frac{7}{8}$ " wide split along the circumference of the alternator belt groove. The problem was discovered during a routine maintenance inspection. Vehicle mileage was 4,000.

In a somewhat similar situation, BYERLY FORD of Louisville, Kentucky submitted a power steering pump pulley that was removed from a 1977 Ford Econoline van with 1,352 miles. The inside portion of the pulley, where the belt tracks, was split and separated.



Crankshaft Pulley
1977 Ford LTD (Police Package)
DALLAS COUNTY, TEXAS

TWO NEW INVESTIGATIONS—*Continued*

gear shift lever may break due to fatigue, or the lever may separate from the transmission, coming out in the driver's hand. In either case, the driver will be unable to shift gears. The NHTSA has received 16 owner complaints and Ford reported 28 other complaints, including one accident allegedly due to the problem. The manufacturer also reported a 35 percent parts replacement rate for one of these gear shift levers, and a 19 percent parts replacement rate for the other.

The second investigation involves the power steering control valve on 1.5 million Ford Granadas and Mercury Monarchs. The federal safety agency has received 24 complaints, including one alleged accident, concerning a steering problem in which the vehicle wanders, requiring drivers to continually make steering corrections to stay in the proper lane. The manufacturer reported four accidents including three injuries allegedly due to this problem.

If you have any information pertinent to these investigations please contact the PRP immediately.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has asked for our help. The EPA, Office of Noise Abatement and Control, is interested in obtaining any information on vehicle parts or components for which excessive noise is an indication of a problem, as well as the techniques used to solve the problem. This might include certain exhaust system components, for example. You may want to use one of your new Information Report Forms. We will pass the information on to the EPA.

- Automotive researchers may have found a practical solution to reducing one of the most costly and common types of traffic accidents—the rear-end collision which accounts for nearly 3 million accidents annually.

Recently completed NHTSA research indicates that this type of accident was reduced by 54 percent in a test group of Washington, D.C. taxicabs. The cabs were experimentally equipped with brake lights mounted above the vehicle's trunk just beneath the centerline of the rear window. In addition, they were equipped with conventional brake lights. The accident experience of these cabs was compared to a like number of taxicabs having only conventional brake lights.

Rear-end collisions account for about 25 percent of all cab accidents in Washington, D.C., and the research showed promising results in reducing daytime as well as nighttime accidents. Only 16 percent of the daytime rear-end accidents involved cabs equipped with the center, high-mounted light, as compared to 31 percent of an equal number of "control" cabs equipped with conventional rear lights. The nighttime figures were even better. The control group accounted for 35 percent of all nighttime rear-end accidents, whereas the center, high-mount equipped cabs were involved in only 10 percent.

- ROPE GARAGE of Coon Rapids, Minnesota, reported a failure of the left front spring in a 1977 Dodge Tradesman van with 39,000 miles. The center coil reportedly broke while the vehicle was in motion, causing the tire to rub against the fender and affecting vehicle control. The coil is a #42 type, heavy duty, and the shop reported knowledge of eleven other similar incidents. Please tell us if you are aware of similar failures in late model Dodge vans.
- The CINCINNATI FIRE DEPT. recently forwarded a report to the PRP on an accident involving one of their 1974 Dodge rescue ambulance vehicles. The vehicle was reportedly involved in an accident during an emergency run. Investigation of the accident by an engineering firm reportedly indicated that the accident may have been caused by the initiation of fatigue cracks in the steering arm. Vehicle mileage was reported at 80,000.

TELEPHONE CALLS

If you want to report vehicle/component failures, are in need of additional supplies, e.g., mailbags, tags, or information report forms, have any questions, or would like to pass on comments, please Call Collect: (703) 527-4500. Our staff, Bruce Beddow, Guy Whiddon, and Martin Lowery, will be happy to assist. We are on Eastern Time and are 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 the Parts Return Program, c/o Kappa Systems, Inc., 1501 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22209.

OUTSTANDING PARTICIPANTS

Our outstanding participants are those that have sent to the PRP at least one component or item of information during the current month. The number in parentheses before a participant's name identifies the number of consecutive months the participant has sent in components and information. New members who have just become active in the PRP for this year (July 1977 to June 1978) are identified with an asterisk before their name. This month, 22 members became new active participants and two have sent in components or information in consecutive months. We need more active participants. Please make your contribution toward highway traffic safety today.

REGION 9

L.A.D. AUTO ELECTRIC
Spokane, WA

REGION 9a

A.T.S.
San Diego, CA
ISE AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE
Hollywood, CA
* LEE RANDALL AND SON
San Diego, CA
MAURICE'S AUTOMOTIVE
Hollywood, CA

REGION 6

ADAMS MOTOR SERVICE
St. Charles, MO
ATWELL AUTO REPAIR
St. Louis, MO
* THE CAR SHOP
Chicago, IL
* J. GARTNER AUTO SERVICE
Chicago, IL
* RAYMOND'S AUTO REPAIR
Chicago, IL
* ROBERT'S AUTO REPAIR
Chicago, IL
TOMAN AUTO REPAIR
St. Louis, MO

REGION 5

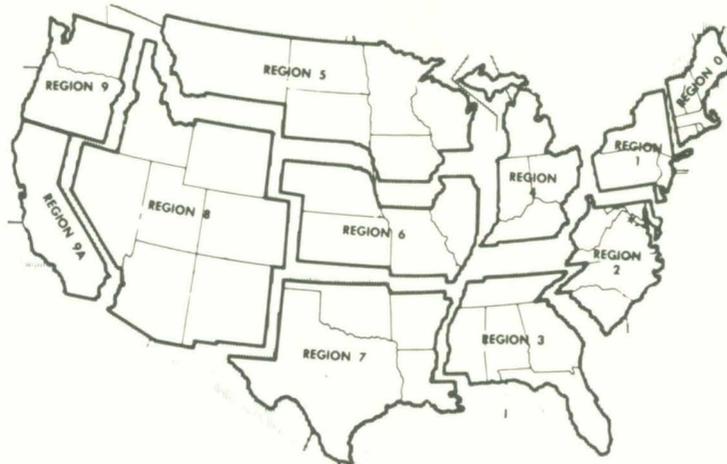
* HESSEFORT SERVICE
Kenosha, WI
* KATON'S GARAGE
Lead, SD
* MINNESOTA GAS COMPANY
Minneapolis, MN
RICHFIELD WHEEL ALIGNMENT
Minneapolis, MN
* STATE OF MINNESOTA
St. Paul, MN

REGION 4

* BYERLY FORD
Louisville, KY
* CITY OF CINCINNATI
Cincinnati, OH

REGION 0

* CAMBRIDGE BRAKE SERVICE
Cambridge, MA
(8) HARRY'S AUTO SERVICE
Great Barrington, MA
* NASH ROAD MOTORS
New Bedford, MA
* SPARKY'S AUTO SERVICE CENTER
New Bedford, MA



REGION 1

CENTRAL CITY GARAGE
Harrisburg, PA
KOLESNIK'S SERVICE STATION
Rochester, NY
* MIDAS MUFFLER
Pennsauken, NJ
* NEW YORK AUTO RADIATOR AND
BODY SHOP
Albany, NY

REGION 2

(8) AUTO BRAKE CORPORATION
Norfolk, VA
MUSTEN AUTO SERVICE
Winston-Salem, NC

REGION 3

* BRITISH EUROPEAN AUTO SERVICE
Miami, FL
* EDDIE'S GARAGE
Nashville, TN
* RIVERSIDE AUTO PARTS
Macon, GA

REGION 8

* MR BRAKE #9
Pocatello, ID
* PRITZ FOREIGN CARS OF COLORADO
Colorado Springs, CO

REGION 7

* COUNTY OF DALLAS
Dallas, TX
FIFTH STREET AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE
Tyler, TX
PRO-TUNE
Port Arthur, TX

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