



parts return program

news

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

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DODGE BRAKE PROBLEMS REVISITED

Remember our article about Dodge vans experiencing brake piston-freeze up, as reported in the PRP News, June, 1978? The problem was reported on 1977 Dodge B-200 and B-300 vans with brake pistons reportedly made of a lightweight metal alloy anodized with a surface similar to teflon. This month the PRP has received a failed brake caliper piston from a 1977 Dodge Aspen. The Aspen piston has a smaller surface diameter than the B-200 and B-300 van pistons; the material, however, appears to be the same.

According to the shop which sent the piston, JONES SERVICE, Delmar, New York, the vehicle suffered a loss of braking power as a result of brake fluid leakage due to a "flat spot" worn on the piston surface. Bud Jones, owner of JONES SERVICE, notes that fluid leaked out along the piston's flattened area, ultimately causing the brake loss. He points out this could possibly be the result of uneven brake pad wear over time, causing the piston to move out of the cylinder on an angle. Such erratic piston travel could possibly cause a flattening of the piston surface.

The NHTSA is currently looking into Aspen brake problems and would appreciate any additional information from members.

TELEPHONE CALLS
Call us COLLECT at
(703) 527-4500

TRIUMPH TR-7 FUEL PUMPS

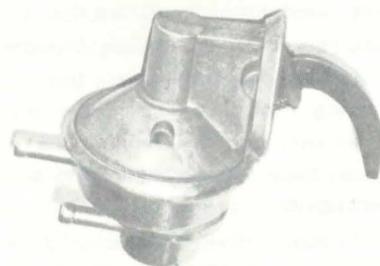
TIM'S IMPORT SALES AND SERVICE in Hutchinson, Kansas has forwarded to the PRP two leaking fuel pumps, one taken from a 1975 Triumph TR-7 with 18,079 miles and the other from a 1976 model with 26,563 miles. The owner of one of these vehicles noticed puddles of gasoline where the car had been parked. The shop first checked all fuel lines and after finding no leaks, investigated the fuel pump. Because the leak was not continuous, the problem was difficult to diagnose.

Fuel pumps for the Triumph TR-7, as shown in the picture, are designed to be assembled by crimping the pump cover to the main housing. Tim's reports that this does not make a seal sufficient enough to prevent fuel leakage.

According to the shop, through normal use, the crimped seal of the pump can work loose, creating an

intermittent leak. At times, there will be no leaking, but at other times fuel will spray out into the engine compartment.

Besides creating abnormal engine operation, whenever a situation involving fuel leakage occurs, there is a potential fire hazard. Because the pump is crimped together, there is nothing to tighten to prevent or eliminate the leak and the entire pump must be replaced. Any information of similar failures in TR-7's, should be forwarded to the PRP.



FORD LIGHT TRUCK AND VAN INVESTIGATION

A suspected safety defect in the steering systems of Ford light trucks and vans produced from 1974 through 1977 is being investigated by the U.S. Department of Transportation. The investigation is centering on Ford E series Econoline vans and F series light trucks which may suffer steering loss when the steering gear box separates from the frame. The problem may be preceded by looseness in steering response; however, steering loss may occur without warning. There are an estimated 1.3

million of these trucks in use, and the NHTSA has received 26 reports of these failures.

In a related case, the American Automobile Association has requested in its December issue of "Let's Talk Road Service" information concerning cracks in the frame flange under the steering gear box in Ford F-350 trucks. These cracks may extend up to the lower steering box attachment bolt.

If you have experienced any of these problems, please report them to the PRP as soon as possible.

SAFETY STANDARDS FOR LIGHT TRUCKS AND VANS

The increasing fatality rate for occupants of light trucks and vans has prompted NHTSA efforts to amend various motor vehicle safety standards for such vehicles, effective 1 September 1980.

NHTSA figures indicate a 25 percent jump in fatalities for this vehicle category between 1975 and 1977, as compared to an increase of only 3.9 percent for passenger cars. In addition, the federal safety agency found that 1975 and 1976 model year light trucks had 21.9 fatalities, against 11.7 fatalities per million miles for passenger cars of similar weight.

The difference between these fatality rates can be reduced, NHTSA said, by extending three of the safety standards already applicable to passenger cars to light trucks and vans with a gross vehicle weight rate of 10,000 pounds or less. These standards involve improved interior padding to protect occupants, improved protection for the driver from the steering control system in the event of an accident, and limiting the distance the steering unit can move backwards in an impact.

Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 201 as amended would require that instrument panels, seat backs, sun visors and arm rests be designed to lessen injuries when persons are thrown against them in crashes.

FMVSS No. 203 as applied to light trucks and vans, would require steering assemblies to cushion the impact which occurs when the driver strikes the steering wheel in an accident.

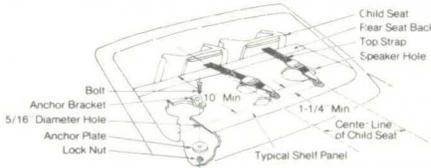
FMVSS No. 204 limits the rearward movement of the steering assembly to no more than five inches, when the vehicle crashes into a barrier at 30 miles per hour.

CHILD RESTRAINT SAFETY

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recently announced it plans to hold a National Child Automobile Restraint Safety Conference this spring to help save the lives of more than 2,200 children under the age of 14 who are killed each year in motor vehicle accidents.

Joan Claybrook, Administrator of the NHTSA, said statistics indicate that "approximately 1,000 children up to age 5 are killed and 100,000 in this age group are injured annually in motor vehicle accidents. Many of these deaths and injuries could be prevented or reduced in severity if the children were restrained so that they are not thrown against the vehicle interior during a crash.

Following the planned national conference, the NHTSA also will conduct 10 regional seminars on the subject of child restraints.



The NHTSA said three simple rules can greatly improve a child's safety while riding in a motor vehicle. Whenever a child is in a car, parents should remember to:

1. Insure that safety belts or child restraints (for children under five years of age) are always used.

2. Make sure that children sit in the rear seats.

3. Never leave the hatchback open when a child rides in the back of a car.

"If these simple rules had been followed, more than two-thirds of the children killed in motor vehicle accidents would still be alive today," Claybrook said.

The NHTSA said an unrestrained child in the front seat of a car is three times as likely to be killed or seriously injured in a crash as a properly restrained child in the rear seat; yet fewer than one in 20 children under five are properly restrained in a child restraint.

The sketch below shows the proper installation of child restraints in the rear of a vehicle.

AVON LAKE, OHIO—PRP CITY

A recent article in the Lorain, Ohio newspaper, *The Journal*, is devoted to the enrollment of the entire town of Avon Lake's independent service stations into the PRP. Tony Abram, an Avon Lake city councilman who is also head of the city's safety committee is responsible for this development.

Councilman Abram read about the PRP in a Department of Transportation newsletter and decided the program would be of value to the community. He contacted the PRP and we of course endorsed his idea wholeheartedly. Abram, when interviewed by the newspaper explained that "I got really good cooperation

from the local stations" adding that "it's better if you have all the stations in a town than one, because people go to different stations."

Phil Bruder, owner of PHIL'S SHELL in Avon Lake, pointed out that "we see stuff far in advance of the people driving the car and way before the government gets wind of it". All of the station owners Abram contacted expressed a keen interest in the PRP, making Avon Lake the first city in the U.S. to have all its stations involved in the program. Keep those parts and information coming, Avon Lake. We hope this is the start of something big!

THE FORUM



One and a half million Ford Pintos were recently recalled by the Ford Motor Co. to correct a problem in the fuel system design. The recall campaign involves the installation of a protective shield between the gas tank and the differential unit. Four recall "kits" are being used, depending upon the engine/exhaust configuration of the vehicle. The type of kit to be used depends upon whether the vehicle uses leaded or unleaded gasoline and whether it is a single or dual exhaust.

FOX AUTOMOTIVE in Tulsa, Oklahoma, has reported a problem in the recall service performed on a 1975 V-6 Pinto equipped with dual exhaust. Within three days of the installation of the shield, the shield began to melt, presumably due to the high temperatures of the exhaust system. It is likely that the wrong kit was used to repair this Pinto. Similar problems should nonetheless be reported to the PRP. In the meantime, if you are involved in servicing Pintos, please take care to check the shield. If you are installing the shields, remember to double-check the part kit.

The PRP would like to extend special thanks to Jim McCarty, Associate Editor of *Brake and Front End Magazine*, for his excellent article on the PRP. The article, which appeared in the November issue, featured Harry May of May's Auto Service in Mansfield, Ohio, discussing his participation in the PRP. May, a recipient of the PRP Administrator's Award stated "we've had no problems whatsoever, and NHTSA definitely has a good thing going. They make it so easy to help that we enjoy it".

Gene Feldmann, President of the Florida Chapter of the Automotive Service Council, (ASC), has reported on an alleged front spindle defect in a 1978 Dodge Custom 300 truck. The vehicle had approximately 12,200 miles on its odometer. After inspection it was determined that the outer end of the spindle snapped off 1 1/2" from the spindle tip. A check

of the bearings revealed that grease was still evident; however, metallic flakes were apparent on the bearing surfaces.

Feldmann's shop, AUTOMOTIVE SAFETY SERVICE, INC., has also come across a 1976 Chrysler Cordoba which suffered a loss of steering power assist. The gearbox would allow turning with power only to the left. Upon examination, it was discovered that the oil flow control valve assembly trough was broken causing all of the power steering fluid to flow to the left side. AUTOMOTIVE SAFETY SERVICE replaced this power steering gearbox in order to correct the problem. The vehicle had only 8,000 miles.

Tim's Import of Hutchinson, Kansas, a regular PRP contributor, has submitted a total of 13 inputs involving safety related defects this month. This is an unusually high count for a single contributor. Thank you Tim's for your outstanding participation.

THE SEARCH FOR THE ENGINE OF THE FUTURE

Secretary of Transportation, Brock Adams, has asked the auto industry to join in an all-out search for the engine of the future, calling for an automotive "summit conference" in Washington early this year.

"Events in Iran and the announcement of rationing by American oil companies reinforce my belief that the curtain is quickly dropping on the age of the internal combustion engine as it is—and the fact is we have no replacement," Adams said in remarks prepared for the Economic Club of Detroit.

"It's time for industry and government to stop butting heads on every-

thing and to start working together for the future," Adams said. "The recent years of trench warfare between government and industry over fuel economy has resulted in a 1978 car that gets about as many miles per gallon as did the Model A fifty years ago."

He said he will ask the Chief Executives of the Big Four to bring the "best brains in the industry" to a meeting in Washington early in the year to press for development of a car that will again put America on top of world markets and eliminate the country's growing dependence on foreign oil.

WOODY'S GARAGE, Montoursville, Pennsylvania, reports a brake hose problem in the 1977 Dodge B-200 van. The brake hose can be damaged by rubbing against the wheel, causing loss of brakes. One possible solution, according to the shop, is to re-route the brake line and lengthen the brake hose.

TELEPHONE CALLS

Have you got what you need to get us what we need? If you're out of bags, if you're out of tags or even if you simply want to get the message to us fast—Give us a call COLLECT at (703) 527-4500.

OUTSTANDING PARTICIPANTS

The members highlighted below have contributed parts or information to the PRP within the past month. Asterisks indicate first contributions for the year (July, 1978 through June, 1979). Numbers in parenthesis indicate consecutive active months.



REGION 0

G&M AUTO SUPPLY
Bridgeport, CT
SANDMEYER TEXACO
Cornwall Bridge, CT

* WOODY'S GARAGE
Montoursville, PA
* SCOTTY'S AUTO
King of Prussia, PA

REGION 1

* CITY OF LANCASTER
Lancaster, PA
* NEW YORK AUTO RADIATOR
& BODY CO.
Albany, NY

REGION 2

(2) B. W. RILEY ALIGNMENT
AND BRAKE
Springfield, VA
(4) AUTO BRAKE CORP.
Norfolk, VA

REGION 5

BROOKLYN CENTER SHELL
Brooklyn Center, MN

REGION 6

FLAIR AUTO
Chicago, IL
(2) TIM'S IMPORT SALES & SERVICE
Hutchinson, KS
* ATWELL AUTO
St. Louis, MO
BRAKE-O-MAT
Evanston, IL

REGION 7

* C & S BRAKE SERVICE
Fort Worth, TX
(2) FOX AUTOMOTIVE
Tulsa, OK

REGION 8

S&D TIRE & AUTO CENTER, INC.
Salt Lake City, UT
(2) DUNCAN'S AUTO
Phoenix, AZ
* JOHN'S GARAGE
Nampa, ID

REGION 9A

* MAURICE'S AUTOMOTIVE
Hollywood, CA
* AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION
SERVICE
San Diego, CA

REGION 9

(2) WAYNE'S GARAGE
Eugene, OR

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