DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
January 4, 1974

NHTSA - 01-74(HP)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) warned motorists today of the hazards involved in the transportation of gasoline in portable containers in the trunks of cars.

The Federal Safety Agency said it has received reports of motorists purchasing gasoline containers, presumably to store extra fuel in homes and cars during the energy crisis.

"I cannot stress strongly enough," said NHTSA Administrator Dr. James B. Gregory, "that such practices could have serious consequences. Even a minor rear-end collision with a vehicle in which extra gasoline is being carried in the trunk could set off an inferno resulting in injury or death. In addition, sparks from a short in a tail light or brake light can set off an explosion."

"Our best advice," Dr. Gregory said, "is to avoid carrying fuel in such a manner."

Especially hazardous, according to the Safety Agency, are glass and plastic containers, or most fuel containers used by homeowners for power lawnmowers. Rusted metal containers should also be avoided, the Agency warned.

- more -

Only in the most extreme emergencies should the transportation of extra fuel be considered, and in these circumstances the container should be rugged, securely closed, and protected against accidental spillage or damage. Even then such containers should be removed from the vehicle immediately upon completion of travel. Special care must also be taken to insure that vehicle occupants are not exposed to gasoline fumes, the agency said.

"Storage of gasoline in portable containers in the car or around the home always involves risk," Dr. Gregory emphasized.

##

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
Washington, D.C. 20590

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 4, 1974

NHTSA --02-74 (PF)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation today announced a new Consumer Information Regulation designed to help the American motorist to buy the best possible tires for his car. The regulation, issued by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), is essentially the same as that proposed last March.

The new regulation will require tire manufacturers and brand name owners to grade and label their products in the areas of treadwear, traction, and high speed performance. This will affect highway passenger car tires for use on 13-inch, 14-inch, and 15-inch rims.

Grades for each area of performance will be molded into the tire sidewall, and also stated on a label attached to the tire's tread. The label will also contain an explanation of the grades, and a statement that the tire meets Federal safety requirements.

Treadwear and traction grades will be assigned after measuring the performance of a tire against the performance of a control tire. Thus, for treadwear the number "80" will represent a performance of at least 80 percent of the level reached by the control tire, and the number "200" will represent at least 200 percent of this level. Five numbers - 60, 80, 120, 160, and 200 - will be used.

Tires graded for traction will show the numbers "90, 105, or 120," representing that percentage of control tire performance. This differs from the original proposal in that numbers, instead of asterisks, will be used.

- more -

High speed performance grades will be indicated by the letters "A, B, or C," with "A" being the highest grade, and "C" indicating the minimum level of performance required by Federal safety standards.

The regulation specifies that tire grading information be furnished to prospective buyers of tires, as well as to prospective purchasers of new passenger cars.

The effective date of the regulation is September 1, 1974.

##########

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

FIRST CLASS

U.S.MAIL

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY
January 10, 1974

NHTSA 04-74(RC)
Tel. 202-426-9550

American Indians are being killed and injured in highway accidents possibly more than four times faster than other U. S. citizens ... a problem the Congress and the Department of Transportation have earmarked for special attention. The Highway Safety Act of 1973 authorizes funds to attack this problem and programs which have already benefited most Americans will now be applied directly to our Indian tribes.

"This particular need of the Indians has been clearly recognized in the Act," said Dr. James B. Gregory, Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), "and we intend to work with the Department of Interior to tackle the problem as speedily as possible."

Indians face the same dangers on the highway as all Americans, NHTSA points out, but their casualties far outstrip the cold statistics of the national average population. By any criteria, the Federal Agency said, the Indians' highway fatality rate, coast to coast, ranges from four to twenty times higher than that of the national average. Indeed, NHTSA noted, if the most conservative of these Indian motor vehicle fatality figures were applied to the national population, at least 200,000 Americans would have died in traffic accidents, as opposed to the 57,000 fatalities recorded for last year.

- more -

Whatever the traffic problems are with the majority of Americans, they are compounded with Indian tribes, NHTSA said. Fatalities reach an unusually high peak with the majority of U. S. citizens in the 15 to 24 year old age bracket ... where the Indian rate is twice as high. The problem of alcohol usage is reported to be more crucial with Indians. On a National basis it is estimated that about 50 percent of all traffic fatalities involve alcohol. In comparison, leaders of the larger Indian nations, such as the Navajo and Sioux, estimate that 90 percent or more of their tribes' losses to traffic accidents involve excessive drinking.

In addition, the traffic problems of the Indian are further complicated by the fact that many reservations, and the areas surrounding them, lack adequate police surveillance or emergency medical facilities.

All of these issues were discussed recently at a gathering of Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), NHTSA, and tribal council leaders in Warm Springs, Oregon. As a result, all tribes in this country will first fill out BIA questionnaires citing their most crucial traffic problems, on and near the reservations. Once these replies have been analyzed, Interior will select specific tribes and areas, on a priority basis, for traffic safety improvement programs concentrating upon emergency medical service needs, alcohol involvement, police traffic services and adult expanded driver education programs.

##

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

FIRST CLASS

U.S.MAIL

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 1974

NHTSA -- 6-74 (PF)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation said today it has determined that a safety defect exists in the steering pitman arm of General Motors Corporation 1959 and 1960 model year Cadillac cars.

In a letter to the President of General Motors, Dr. James B. Gregory, Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) directed the manufacturer to furnish a safety defect notification to owners of 1959 and 1960 Cadillac automobiles. Dr. Gregory further urged General Motors to recall these vehicles for corrective action at no cost to the owners.

The pitman arm is a critical component of the steering system, connecting the steering shaft to the steering linkage. Its failure causes total loss of vehicle directional control and could result in serious vehicle crashes.

The safety agency said it based its findings on an investigation which indicated that the cause of pitman arm failures in the Cadillac models in question is metal fatigue from repetitive stresses induced into the arm during low speed turns and parking maneuvers during normal usage. The preliminary investigation was concluded in August 1973. Subsequently, General Motors was given an opportunity in a public procedure to present its views.

Approximately 60,000 1959-1960 Cadillacs are involved. The NHTSA report states that the pitman arms have failed frequently and without warning, causing complete steering loss, and thus creating an unreasonable risk of accidents, injuries, and deaths to drivers and passengers.

##########

79577

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE TUESDAY
January 15, 1974

NHTSA -- 7-74 (HP)
Tel. 202-426-9550

Lowered highway speed limits, brought on by the energy shortage, are having a beneficial effect on highway safety. The Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has released early estimates which show that those States which have lowered their highway speed limits are experiencing a substantial drop in highway fatalities.

Dr. James B. Gregory, the NHTSA Administrator, said an analysis of figures from the 16 States which had reduced highway speed limits during November shows a drop in fatalities of 15 to 20 percent below November of 1972. Dr. Gregory attributes most of the reduction to enforced lower speed limits. The remaining 34 States which did not lower speed limits in November showed a two percent drop in fatalities, part of which may be attributed to reduced automobile travel and to motorists who lowered their driving speeds voluntarily.

NHTSA pointed to the significantly reduced fatalities over the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's holidays as further evidence that the lower highway speeds and some reduction in highway travel are paying off in highway safety.

As for the future, Dr. Gregory said his agency has projected an early estimate that 1974 traffic fatalities may be reduced between 4,000 and 5,000 now that President Nixon has signed the legislation providing for a nationwide speed limit of 55 mph.

"Assuming that all States pass and conscientiously enforce the reduced speed limits," Dr. Gregory said, "we hope for as many as 6,000 fewer automobile occupant fatalities. Measured against this, however, may be an

- more -

increase in fatalities of some 1,000 to 2,000 because of increased use of motorcycles and bicycles, an increase in pedestrian traffic, a growth in small car usage, and the possible effects of car pooling. We will continue to track the results on a current basis to confirm or modify these preliminary estimates."

Dr. Gregory pointed out that effective enforcement of the reduced speed limits and wide voluntary cooperation on the part of all Americans are essential to the accomplishment of such a large reduction in deaths.

##########

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

FIRST CLASS

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY
January 16, 1974

NHTSA -- 3-74 (RC)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The safety problems posed by the increasing mixture of small versus large cars will be examined in San Francisco this summer by the National Motor Vehicle Safety Advisory Council at its Third International Congress on Automotive Safety. Although the current energy crisis has accelerated a buyers' preference for the lighter weight, more economical, vehicles the Council is concerned that the smaller cars are inherently less crashworthy in the event of a collision with larger cars.

At the same time, the July 15, 16, and 17 meeting, will study the possibility of improving car designs as a method of reducing pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities, which last year increased to nearly 12,000.

"Both subjects warrant further investigation and are timely in light of increased consumer demand for smaller, more economical vehicles, and increased bicycle use," according to Mr. Judson Branch, Chairman of the Council.

The Advisory Council is a 22-member group created by the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966 to advise the Secretary of Transportation on Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards administered by the Department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Its members represent a cross-section of the motor vehicle industry, researchers, national organizations, consumer groups, State and local officials, and the general public.

Secretary of Transportation Claude S. Brinegar has commended the Council for its plan to sponsor "a vital forum on new and emerging issues in highway safety."

- more -

The Conference will be divided into four primary discussion areas:

- Vehicle factors affecting pedestrian and bicyclist safety
- Crash survivability, crash avoidance and vehicle characteristics
- Tradeoffs between safety, pollution and efficiency
- Analyses and projections of the current and future safety problems of small cars, bicyclists and pedestrians.

The Advisory Council is inviting participation from organizations and individuals concerned with motor vehicle, pedestrian and bicyclist safety. Those interested in presenting papers should contact Mr. Herbert D. Smith, Congress Chairman, National Motor Vehicle Safety Advisory Council, N40-10, U.S. Department of Transportation, Washington, D. C. 20590.

####################

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY
January 17, 1974

NHTSA -- 5-74
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation issued a policy statement today outlining steps the Government is taking to enforce compliance by manufacturers with the Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

Last October, the Department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announced a similar policy statement concerning the handling of defects investigations, and procedures for determining whether a safety-related defect exists in motor vehicles or vehicle equipment used on the Nation's streets and highways.

Sections 112 and 113 of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966 authorize the NHTSA to conduct investigations and testing to determine whether motor vehicles or items of motor vehicle equipment comply with the Federal safety standards.

The provisions of Section 113 of the Act are applicable to non-complying manufacturers and require them to notify purchasers when a safety-related defect emerges from the non-compliance.

NHTSA Administrator Dr. James B. Gregory said the new policy directives are consistent with the goals of his agency to protect the consumer from defective cars.

"It is my belief that these procedures will enhance the participation and assistance of both industry and consumer interests in our regulatory goals," Dr. Gregory said.

- more -

The Safety Agency said it will carry out its compliance enforcement responsibilities with these procedures:

1. NHTSA's Office of Standards Enforcement will (a) verify that manufacturers provide certification that their products meet all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards; (b) evaluate the certifications by investigation and by examining supporting information and data requested from the manufacturers and from other sources; and (c) examine actual performance of motor vehicles and equipment to ascertain compliance through actual physical testing on a sampling basis.

2. The Office of Standards Enforcement has established compliance test priorities which will be re-evaluated on an annual basis.

3. When the Office of Standards Enforcement encounters a test failure, it will advise the manufacturer by telephone in order that he can initiate his own investigation into the problem.

4. Monthly compliance reports will be issued by the NHTSA containing an identification of the compliance test reports completed during the month with a brief summary of their contents; a listing of investigations opened and closed during the period; and a listing of those pending.

5. The Administrator or his delegate will make a preliminary determination of non-compliance based upon the investigative file compiled by the Office of Standards Enforcement. The manufacturer will be notified of this determination by the Office of Chief Counsel.

6. The views and evidence submitted by the manufacturer in response to the notice letter will be reviewed and a final determination as to the existence or non-existence of the non-compliance will be made by the Administrator or his delegate.

7. If the Administrator or his delegate has determined that a non-compliance does exist and the manufacturer has not issued defect notifications, the matter will be referred to the appropriate Associate Administrator for consideration. If he determines that a safety-related defect exists, the manufacturer will be given an opportunity to present his views that the alleged defect does not affect motor vehicle safety. Interested members of the public will be invited to participate in the proceedings through a notice in the Federal Register.

##########

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 18, 1974

NHTSA -- 12-74 (RC)
Telephone 202-426-9550

The U.S. Department of Transportation today announced the award of contracts totaling $2.18 million for preliminary design studies on an advanced state-of-the art Research Safety Vehicle (RSV). The 15 month project, building on the experience gained in the Department's earlier Experimental Safety Vehicle (ESV) program, concentrates upon designs offering a maximum of safety protection, without adverse effects upon fuel consumption and pollution emission, for cars produced in the 1980's.

Contractors selected to work on the first phase of a planned four stage program administered by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to develop a 3,000 pound RSV, include the Ford Motor Company ($595,000); The Volkswagenwerk AG of the Federal Republic of Germany ($605,000); Calspan of Buffalo, N.Y. ($351,957); The Advanced Systems Laboratory of AMF Incorporated ($398,455); and Minicars Incorporated, ($215,566); both of Goleta, California.

-more-

The study effort in this initial stage will first define program needs through a detailed analysis of current accident data which will be projected to the middle of the next decade. Trends on expected automobile usage will be studied, with particular emphasis upon population growth, economic factors, roadway trends, anticipated regulations and alternate methods of transportation. In addition, the study will include mileage traveled, vehicle size and the number of occupants. All of this data will be analyzed as a basis for preliminary conceptual designs reflecting cost effectiveness and projected safety payoff. Completion of the analyses will lead to proposals for Phase II of the overall project.

Final design of the RSV will be determined in a second stage development of 18 months. An additional year will be required for the actual building of the car, including a final refinement of selected designs. Testing and evaluation of the completed RSV will require yet another year. From the initiation of the first phase study to final testing, the entire project will consume nearly five years.

Under Secretary of Transportation John W. Barnum cited the contract awards as "a common sense approach to a significant increase in safety with consideration for economic, ecological and engineering requirements" for the mid-1980's.

The ESV program began in 1968, under a Congressional mandate to build experimental and research vehicles. Models of a larger car designed to investigate the upper limits of safety performance were built by Ford, General Motors, Fairchild Industries and AMF Incorporated, and tested by NHTSA in 1972 and 1973.

International cooperation in the ESV program has focused on the development of compact and subcompact class cars. Foreign participants have included The Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, France, The United Kingdom and all members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization who have large automobile companies participating in the ESV program at the direct urging of President Nixon. In addition, the non-NATO countries, Sweden and Japan, also are participating in the program.

##########

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

TAD-493

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 21, 1975

NHTSA -- 6-74 (HP)
Tel. 202-426-9550

Preliminary figures provided by the states show traffic fatalities declined dramatically in 1974 to an estimated 45,400, the U. S. Department of Transportation reported today. The traffic toll -- the lowest since 1963 when 42,600 died -- was an estimated 9,400 below the 1973 total.

Early fatality estimates for the month of December 1974, based on reports from 49 states to the Department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), show a reduction of more than one per cent compared to the number of persons killed in traffic accidents in December 1973.

While the reduction of one percent is the smallest recorded for any month in 1974, the December figure represents a reduction of almost 19 per cent compared to December 1972. It also marks the 14th consecutive month that traffic fatalities have been below the comparable period of a year earlier.

Dr. James B. Gregory, the federal highway safety chief, said he is encouraged by the decline in traffic deaths. "These statistics clearly demonstrate the life-saving value of lowered speed limits and less driving. Still, more can be done and we hope these deaths decline even more dramatically as the states intensify their efforts to enforce the nationwide 55 mph limit and continue their efforts to implement effective highway safety programs."

- more -

Dr. Gregory stressed the need for motorists to exercise sound safety practices, such as wearing safety belts and guarding against the danger of alcohol abuse, and to conserve fuel.

The estimated number of persons killed in 1974 does not include non-traffic fatalities, such as parking lot and private driveway deaths, which generally total more than 1,000 victims per year.

ESTIMATED TRAFFIC FATALITIES AND CHANGES

	1974	1973	Per Cent Change
January	2,950	3,834	-23.1
February	2,625	3,479	-24.5
March	3,192	4,328	-26.2
April	3,442	4,454	-22.7
May	3,732	4,813	-22.5
June	4,141	5,135	-19.4
July	4,320	5,156	-16.2
August	4,537	5,227	-13.2
September	4,190	4,899	-14.5
October	4,371	5,203	-16.0
November*	4,113	4,410	- 6.7
December**	3,858	3,908	- 1.3

*Corrected Figure

**Estimated on Data From 49 States

Traffic Fatality Estimates Based on Early Reports

December 1974/1973

The following figures for the recent month are NHTSA adjusted estimates based on early State reports, and in some cases may differ slightly from preliminary figures published by the States.

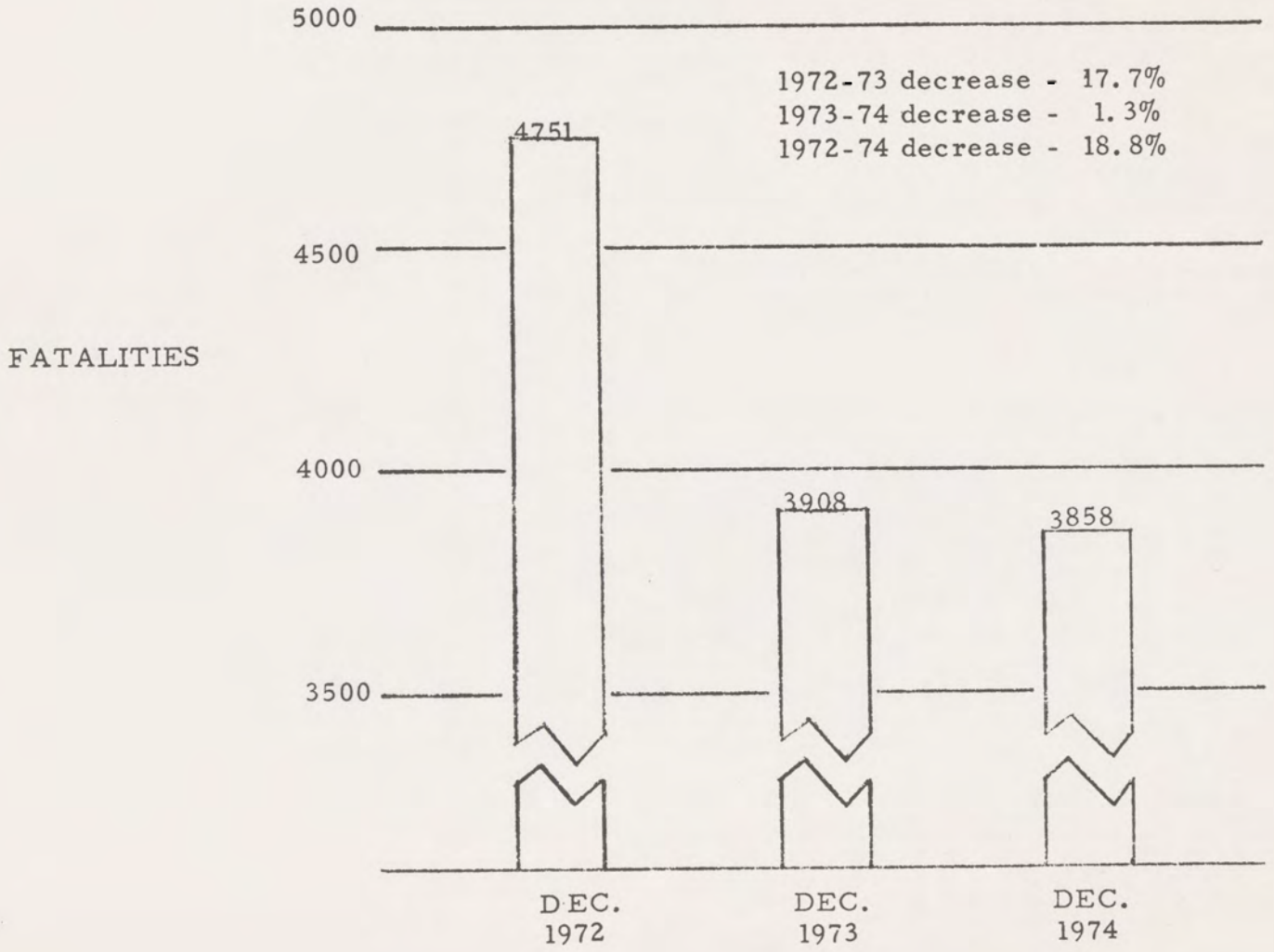
STATE	Dec. 1974	Dec. 1973	PER CENT Change
Alabama	75	102	-26.5
Alaska	7	4	+75.0
Arizona	61	58	+5.2
Arkansas	40	60	-33.3
California	378	316	+19.6
Colorado	53	47	+12.8
Connecticut	41	37	+10.8
Delaware	10	6	+66.7
Florida	206	199	+3.5
Georgia	145	170	-14.7
Hawaii	9	12	-25.0
Idaho	24	16	+50.0
Illinois	146	179	-18.4
Indiana	101	92	+9.8
Iowa	62	49	+26.5
Kansas	56	48	+16.7
Kentucky	64	51	+25.5
Louisiana	79	89	-11.2
Maine	19	19	0.0
Maryland	91	55	+65.5
Massachusetts	104	67	+55.2
Michigan	124	137	-9.5
Minnesota	49	70	-30.0
Mississippi	43	74	-41.9
Missouri	81	78	+3.8
Montana	30	30	0.0
Nebraska	28	28	0.0
Nevada	18	23	-21.7
New Hampshire	10	13	-23.1
New Jersey	127	100	+27.0
New Mexico	54	50	+8.0
New York	245	200	+22.5
North Carolina	136	147	-7.5
North Dakota	14	5	+180.0
Ohio	130	167	-22.2

STATE	Dec. 1974	Dec. 1973	PER CENT Change
Oklahoma	70	57	+22.8
Oregon	67	37	+81.1
Pennsylvania*	189	208	-9.1
Rhode Island	6	6	0.0
South Carolina	64	93	-31.2
South Dakota	22	23	-4.3
Tennessee	103	107	-3.7
Texas	185	278	-33.5
Utah	13	23	-43.5
Vermont	17	10	+70.0
Virginia	91	90	+1.1
Washington	60	53	+13.2
West Virginia	26	24	+8.3
Wisconsin	80	83	-3.6
Wyoming	5	18	-72.2
TOTAL	3,858	3,908	-1.3

*ESTIMATED

U. S. TRAFFIC FATALITY ESTIMATES

(50 States)



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE MONDAY P.M.
January 21, 1974

NHTSA -- 9-74 (PF)
Tel. 202-426-9550

Motor vehicle equipment and tire manufacturers would be required to file reports concerning safety-related defects under a proposal issued today by the Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Such reporting serves to advise the Safety Agency of manufacturer's defects and allows it to monitor notification and recall campaigns.

The proposed amendment to NHTSA's defect reports regulations, which presently apply only to vehicle manufacturers, would require filing with the agency of defect information and quarterly reports by tire and other equipment manufacturers.

Equipment manufacturers, other than tire manufacturers, would be required to include the name and address, where known, of each distributor, dealer, or vehicle manufacturer to whom defective equipment has been sold, and the number of items sold to each.

The proposed amendment would also revoke the requirement that vehicle manufacturers include in their quarterly defect reports the production figures for vehicles they manufacture.

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the proposal to the Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. The comment period closes on April 16, 1974.

##########

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE MONDAY
January 21, 1974

NHTSA -- 11-74 (HP)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation moved today to extend the requirements of its windshield retention standard to multipurpose passenger vehicles, buses and light trucks weighing 10,000 pounds or less.

In the first of a projected series of rulemakings that would extend standards to vehicles other than passenger cars, the Department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) proposes to amend Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 212, Windshield Mounting.

The existing standard is designed to provide for retention of the vehicle windshield during a crash, to fully utilize the penetration-resistant windshields, and to prevent ejection of occupants from the vehicle.

In addition to affecting vehicles frequently used as "second" cars, the proposed amendment would reduce the cost of compliance testing for both the Federal Government and the manufacturer. It would also coordinate its existing vehicle loading, dummy type, and test options with the test procedures of Standard No. 208, Occupant Crash Protection, to encourage more efficient certification and compliance testing.

The NHTSA proposal would modify Standard No. 212 to facilitate simultaneous testing under Standard 212 and Standard 208, and to eliminate test option (a) found in the present requirement.

Test option (a) utilizes no dummies. As modified, the test procedure in the standard would require unrestrained dummies, one at each front outboard seating position and any other seating position whose protection system is required to be tested under provisions of Standard 208.

- more -

The NHTSA proposes an effective date of September 1, 1975 for the amendment. Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the proposal by March 4, 1974 to the Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Washington, D.C. 20590.

##########

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

FIRST CLASS

U.S.MAIL

79589

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 22, 1974

NHTSA--15-74 (HP)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is readying a major revision of the Federal Safety Standard which governs manufacturers of children's automobile safety restraints.

Dr. James B. Gregory, who heads the NHTSA, said he is aware that many organizations and consumer groups are anxious to know of Federal progress in upgrading the level of protection for child auto passengers. "I want all interested parties to know," he said, "and I want to put the industry on notice too, that we will be proposing major revisions to the standard in March. Our schedule in rulemaking -- our plan -- has called for the issuance of an upgrading amendment at that time. We are confident that we will meet that date."

Dr. Gregory said the revisions will apply to all child-protective equipment in motor vehicles. He emphasized that manufacturers will face new performance requirements based on dynamic (in-motion) test procedures.

The NHTSA says it has been aware since the first Child Seating Standard No. 213 went into force on April 1, 1971, that the provisions of the standard would have to be upgraded as rapidly as

-more-

manufacturer know-how and practical performance tests could be established. Dr. Gregory described his agency's current Standard No. 213 as a first step which was necessary to get flimsy and dangerously inadequate child seats off the market. "It has done that," he said, "and we have completed an accelerated program of testing and research since that date to establish what performance levels the revised standard must include."

Asked if child car seats which satisfy today's Federal Standard are giving adequate crash protection to children, Dr. Gregory said, "no, not in the face of what we have learned and what we now know. That's why we are upgrading the standard." Dr. Gregory defined adequate protection as "the highest level of protection the industry can devise, and which the Government can reasonably require, resulting in a product which will be in the financial reach of the consumer."

By that definition, Gregory said, today's standard does not go far enough. "We think the industry can do much better," he said. "Our research and testing tells us we are ready to demand a higher level of protection." The only problem remaining, according to the Administrator, is to impress parents with the need to provide restraints for their children.

NHTSA says the proposal now being drafted will fully cover devices such as car beds and infant carriers not now covered by the current standard.

NHTSA also points out that most of the focus has been on protection in frontal crashes. The amendment will go beyond that to require protection in other types of crashes such as rollovers and side and rear impacts. Also for the first time, the standard will require dynamic testing.

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

FIRST CLASS

U.S.MAIL

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY A.M.
January 23, 1974

NHTSA -- 8-74(GLW)
Tel. 202-426-0670

The Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reissued a Public Advisory today, to warn owners and operators of certain General Motors school buses of a special maintenance problem that may cause loss of brakes if not given proper attention.

The same warning, first announced in November 1970 for 1959 through 1962 Chevrolet and GMC school buses, was issued again today in order to warn private schools, churches and any others who have purchased the older buses as they are phased out of the nation's public school systems.

According to the Federal Advisory, these school bus models have a single hydraulic system (later models are required by Federal standards to have a double system) and are therefore especially vulnerable to any brake-line rupture. The exhaust tailpipes in these models are suspended above the rear axle and above a flexible brake hose as well, making it extremely important that the support brackets for the tailpipe be maintained at all times. This is to prevent any downward shift or drop of the tailpipe which could cause a rupture of the brake hose and total loss of braking power.

-more-

Dr. James Gregory, NHTSA Administrator, said the warning is especially important since many of the groups which operate these older buses do not have the regular maintenance programs required for buses in public school service. "We are seeking the widest possible publicity for this advisory so that private operators will be aware of the need for such maintenance," Dr. Gregory said.

Today's Advisory recommends that owners of these buses install a special add-on safety bracket, capable of giving emergency support to the exhaust tailpipe in case the regular support brackets fail from lack of proper maintenance. The suggested safety bracket is a hook-shaped rod bolted at one end to the bus frame directly above the rear axle. The other end, bent to form a supporting semi-circle, should be centered under the tailpipe with a minimum of 1/2 inch of clearance from the tailpipe in its normal position.

A detailed sketch of this add-on bracket is available by writing to the Office of Defects Investigation, NHTSA, Washington, D.C. 20590. The Federal safety agency also urges State inspection personnel to be alert to this potential problem in the make and model buses listed and to encourage the installation of these safety brackets. The NHTSA said estimates from the manufacturer indicate that approximately 29,000 of the cited buses were manufactured. Of these the NHTSA estimates that approximately 6,000 are still in service.

###############

INSTALLATION OF PROTECTIVE BRACKET

Purpose: To prevent contact between tailpipe and rear brake hose, in the event the tailpipe loosens, for any reason.

Buses involved: Large conventional buses built by Chevrolet and GMC in model years 1959, 1960, 1961, and 1962.

Step 1: Examine each bus. Measure the distance between the tailpipe and the left main frame member.

Step 2: Purchase for each bus a steel bolt, 1/2 inch in diameter, and 12 inches in length. Bolts should have 2 to 3 inches of thread at one end.

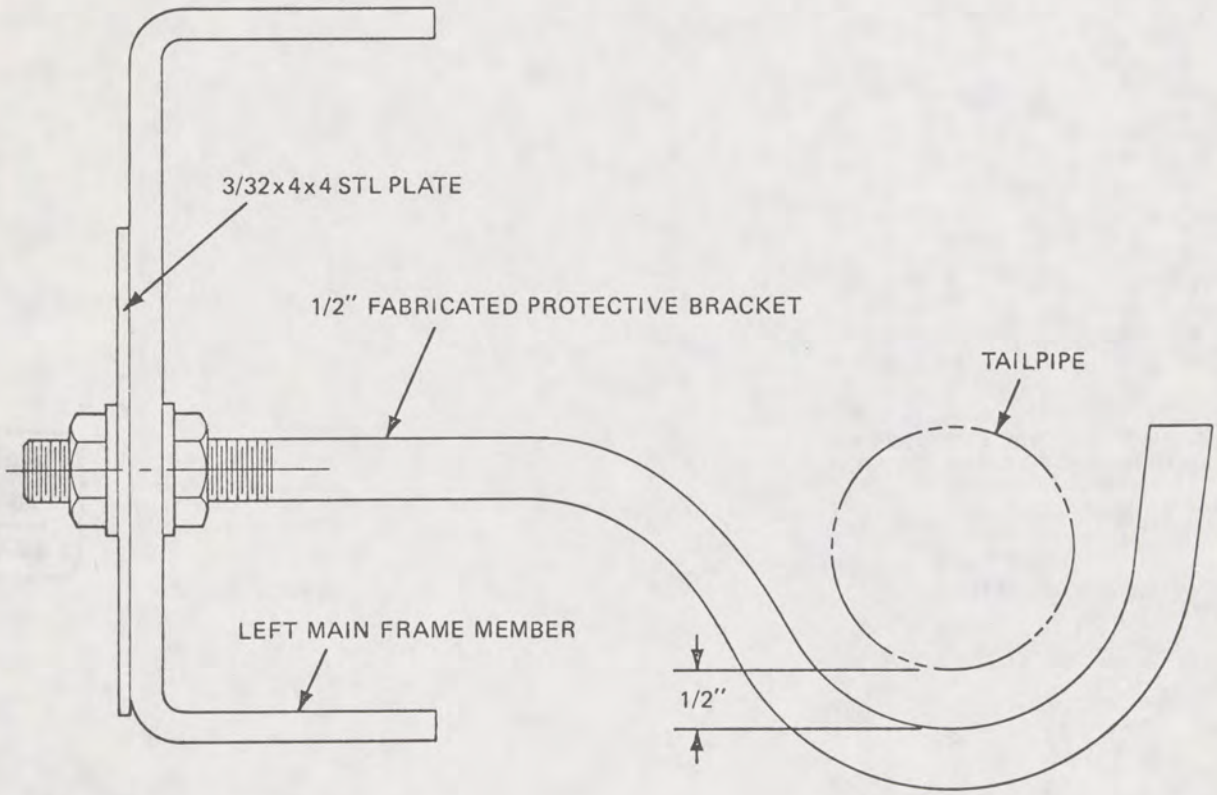
Step 3: Using a hammer and anvil, or a steel plate, bend each bolt into a shape similar to the sketch below.

Step 4: Select the location for drilling a hole in the left frame member by positioning the bolt (after it has been bent) above the rear axle, within 1/2 inch of the tailpipe as shown in the sketch.

Step 5: Drill a hole of about 17/32 inch diameter in the left frame member.

Step 6: Assemble the bracket as shown in the sketch, using a nut and large washer on the inner side of the frame. On the outer side of the frame, use as a spacer a 4 inch by 4 inch piece of 3/32" steel plate. Outboard of this spacer, install a lock washer and nut.

Step 7: Recheck for correct positioning of the bracket and its securing parts. Tighten securely to 40 ft-lbs torque.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR SUNDAY RELEASE
January 27, 1974

NHTSA -- 16-74 (BAB)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says its figures for December confirm its earlier reports that States which had lowered maximum speed limits are showing a significant reduction in highway fatalities. In addition, voluntary reduction of highway speeds and a decrease in total driving may be having a further effect in lowering highway deaths nationwide.

Administrator, Dr. James B. Gregory said his agency earlier reported a 15-20 percent drop in fatalities among those States which had reduced their speed limits in November. The 18 States which had lower maximum speed limits in December have shown an overall reduction of 25 percent in fatalities below December 1972.

In the 32 States which had not lowered their speeds, there was an overall reduction of 12 percent, which Dr. Gregory says may well be due to voluntary action on the part of motorists in reducing speeds, and to reduced travel as a result of the energy shortage. The total December reduction for the entire Nation was 16 percent below the same month in 1972.

-more-

"We must always be cautious about projecting long-term results from short term data," said Dr. Gregory. "Nonetheless, we have seen such a dramatic change in the highway fatality picture that we have high hopes for a significant reduction in total 1974 fatalities."

Dr. Gregory pointed out that the fact that the decrease in November was followed by a large drop in December is especially significant, since the totals for the month of October were close to an all-time high. "We would normally have expected this last November and December to show increases over 1972. Up through last October, our projections for total fatalities in 1973 held at 58,000. We have since reduced that to around 56,500, showing the effect of fatality reductions reported during November and December. Two of the 18 States which lowered their speed limits did show increases in December but this is not statistically significant because of the small numbers involved.

Some States showed remarkable declines. New York, for example, which had 285 fatalities in December 1972, had by NHTSA's report 154 last month -- a drop of 46 percent. Pennsylvania, with 281 in December of 1972, showed 203 last month for a decline of 28 percent. And Florida, with 247 in December 1972, showed 199 last month for a 19 percent decrease.

Dr. Gregory said, "We will be asking others who closely follow highway accident statistics to examine their data and give us the benefit of any conclusions they have come to regarding trends.

"We shall continue to work closely with other Federal agencies, in particular the Cost of Living Council, the Federal Energy Office and the Federal Highway Administration, all of whom have a direct interest in these figures."

HIGHWAY FATALITIES DECEMBER: 1972, 1973

Year	States with Lowered Speed Limits	Other States	Total
1972	1635	3072	4707
1973	1225	2689	3914
% Change	-25.1%	-12.5%	-16.8%
No. of States	18	32	50

Estimated
Traffic Fatalities for
States Enforcing Lower Speed Limits

State	December 1973	December 1972	Percent Change
Alaska	5	4	+25.0%
Connecticut	35	33	+ 6.0
Delaware	6	9	-33.3
Florida	199	247	-19.4
Maryland	55	62	-11.3
Massachusetts	77	96	-19.8
New Hampshire	14	11	+27.3
New Jersey	102	120	-15.0
New York	154	285	-46.0
North Carolina	147	188	-21.8
North Dakota	5	15	-66.7
Oregon	41	45	- 8.9
Pennsylvania	203	281	-27.8
Rhode Island	6	12	-50.0
Vermont	10	10	0
Virginia	88	115	-23.5
Washington	53	61	-13.1
West Virginia	25	41	-39.0
Total	1,225	1,635	-25.17%

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE TUESDAY
January 29, 1974

NHTSA -- 14-74 (HP)
Tel. 202-426-9550

Rex Stroll-O-Chair Manufacturing Company, acting on the recommendation of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), has announced a recall campaign for the firm's Stroll-O-Chair Model #71 child car seats. The car seat adapter portion of the Model #71's does not comply with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 213.

Tests performed on the car seat for the NHTSA demonstrated that the harness could not withstand the minimum load of static pressure required by the standard. It may break upon impact and thus fail to protect a child in the event of a crash.

Owners may return the adapter frame portion to their dealer, or ship it to the manufacturer at 441 West 167th Street, New York, New York 10032. The harness will be repaired to conform with the standard and returned to the customer, at the manufacturer's expense.

##########

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY A.M.
January 31, 1974

NHTSA -- 18-74 (PF)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation has proposed alternative requirements for safety belt interlock systems in all new passenger cars. Under the proposed system, a car's engine could be started, but the vehicle could not move forward under its own power if the belts were not buckled.

The proposed amendment, developed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), would permit the manufacturer to equip his vehicle with an alternative to the present starter interlock system, which prevents starting the engine until the seat belts are properly buckled, or with a drive train interlock. This new system would permit the engine to start but prevent the transmission or some other part of the drive train from being placed in a forward gear until the belts are properly fastened.

Interested parties are invited to submit comments on the proposal to the Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. The comment period closes on March 11, 1974.

If the proposal is adopted, it would become effective upon publication in the Federal Register.

##############################

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY
January 31, 1974

NHTSA -- 20-74 (PF)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation has moved to carry out a court decision involving a motor vehicle safety standard dealing with retreaded tires. The decision of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, January 8, 1974, vacated certain aspects of the standard's permanent labeling provisions.

The Department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has amended Standard No. 117 "Retreaded Pneumatic Tires" to eliminate permanent labeling requirements dealing with tire size, maximum inflation pressure, ply rating, identification as to tubeless or tube-type, and bias/belted and radial construction.

The amendment is effective February 1, 1974.

In a separate action, the safety agency issued a proposal to further amend Standard No. 117 by adding requirements for the actual number of plys and the generic name of the cord material.

Interested parties are invited to comment on the proposal by writing to the Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. The comment period closes February 28, 1974.

##########

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY A.M.
February 1, 1974

NHTSA -- 17-74 (HP)
Tel. 202-426-9550

Persons interested in participating in the Third International Congress on Automotive Safety in San Francisco this summer were urged today to submit abstracts of their papers by the March 1 deadline.

The July 15-17 conference, sponsored by the National Motor Vehicle Safety Advisory Council, will examine safety problems posed by the increase of smaller cars on the highway, and the possibility of improving vehicle designs as a method of reducing pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities.

Individuals who plan to deliver papers should contact Mr. Herbert D. Smith, Congress chairman, National Motor Vehicle Safety Advisory Council, N40-10, U. S. Department of Transportation, Washington, D.C. 20590.

The three-day safety meeting will be divided into four primary discussion areas:

- Vehicle factors affecting pedestrian and bicyclist safety
- Crash survivability, crash avoidance and vehicle characteristics
- Trade-offs between safety, pollution and efficiency
- Analyses and projections of the current and future safety problems of small cars, bicyclists and pedestrians

The Advisory Council is a 22-member group created by the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966 to advise the Secretary of Transportation on Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards administered by the Department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Its members represent a cross-section of the motor vehicle industry, researchers, national organizations, consumer groups, State and local officials, and the general public.

##########

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY
February 6, 1974

NHTSA -- 13-74(GLW)
Tel. 202-426-0670

MONTHLY DEFECT INVESTIGATORY CASES REPORT

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 1973

The Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) released its regular monthly Defect Investigatory Cases Report today, combining November and December defect information into a single report and adding a new section in which its newest investigations are presented to U.S. auto owners in explicit detail.

Dr. James B. Gregory, NHTSA Administrator, said the new section "adds another dimension to our consumer services -- going beyond an alert that his auto might have a defect, to supply every supporting detail that can possibly help him to avoid the problem under investigation." Gregory stated that his agency's monthly reports to the public are reaching the stage of "full detail" the NHTSA has been striving for.

Today's Report includes a listing of Suspended Cases, a category listed for the first time in last month's October Report. A "suspended" case, the NHTSA says, is one which will automatically be moved into the "terminated" group within 60 days, unless new evidence is turned up which indicates it should be returned to an "Active" status and pursued further.

-more-

The NHTSA report series was initiated last year to provide American consumers with the earliest possible warning of safety related problems in automobiles. The reports also provide to consumers and auto manufacturers, alike, prompt notice of NHTSA Findings when official investigations have concluded.

Interested persons, including those with information in connection with current and suspended investigations, who have experienced these failures on their vehicles, are invited to write to: The Office of Consumer Affairs, U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Please include make, model, year, and serial number (VIN) of vehicle and pertinent facts relating to the failure.

Persons wishing to review summaries of the NHTSA's findings in terminated cases, or the public file for suspended cases, may do so in the Technical Reference Library, Room 5108, of the NHTSA at the above address.

##########

SPECIAL PUBLIC ATTENTION IS DIRECTED TO THE SUSPENDED INVESTIGATORY CASES LISTED BELOW, SO THAT PERSONS WITH EXPERIENCE OR INFORMATION THEY CONSIDER VITAL TO THESE INVESTIGATIONS MAY REPORT THE MATTER IN DETAIL TO THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION:

Case Number:	C3-08
Manufacturer:	American Motors Corporation
Make:	All
Model:	All
Year(s):	1970 through 1973
Possible Problems:	Alleged low torque or looseness of critical fasteners in vehicle front end suspension.
Status:	Suspended October 31, 1973, in accordance with the Department of Transportation, NHTSA, Defects Investigation Policy published in the Federal Register, October 12, 1973.

Case Number:	209
Manufacturer:	General Motors Corporation
Make:	Chevrolet
Model:	Biscayne
Year(s):	1969
Possible Problems:	Alleged failure of the rear suspension tie rod causing loss of vehicle control.
Status:	Suspended December 31, 1973, in accordance with the Department of Transportation, NHTSA, Defects Investigation Policy published in the Federal Register, October 12, 1973.

Case Number:	C3-15
Manufacturer:	Chrysler Corporation
Make:	Plymouth
Model:	Valiant
Year(s):	1973
Possible Problems:	Alleged low torque or looseness of fasteners retaining the front suspension upper control arms to chassis.
Status:	Suspended December 31, 1973, in accordance with the Department of Transportation, NHTSA, Defects Investigation Policy published in the Federal Register, October 12, 1973.

Reporting Period: November-December 1973

SAFETY RELATED DEFECT INVESTIGATORY CASES
OPENED THIS REPORTING PERIOD

Case Number:	C4-26
Manufacturer:	General Motors Corporation
Make:	Cadillac
Model:	All
Year(s):	1969 through 1973
Possible Problems:	Alleged steering sticking or locking up on vehicles with power steering; suspected cause binding spool valve in power steering gear.
Case Number:	C4-27
Manufacturer:	Champion Home Builders, Incorporated
Make:	Concord
Model:	28 Foot Motorhome
Year(s):	1973
Possible Problems:	Possible overloaded rear axle, suspension components.
Case Number:	C4-28
Manufacturer:	Ford Motor Company
Make:	Ford Pinto
Model:	Pinto
Year(s):	1971 through 1974
Possible Problems:	Bending of steering assembly, due to wheel impacts, causes binding.
Case Number:	C4-29
Manufacturer:	Ford Motor Company
Make:	All
Model:	All with 4-barrel carburetor
Year(s):	1968 through 1974
Possible Problems:	Plastic fast idle cam breakage on certain (4-barrel Autolite) carburetors can jam throttle in open position.
Case Number:	C4-30
Manufacturer:	Ford Motor Company
Make:	Ford
Model:	School Bus
Year(s):	1966 through 1974
Possible Problems:	Alleged brake drum failure due to inadequate thickness of mounting face.

In order to further public knowledge and understanding of the newly opened investigations and encourage owner reports on the alleged problems involved, we have included a briefing summary on the following pages, explaining the basis, description and function, as well as the failure mode and potential safety-related consequences.

SUBJECT: POTENTIAL POWER STEERING PROBLEM IN 1968-1973 GENERAL MOTORS (GM) PASSENGER CARS
ODI CASE NO. C4-26

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

This case was opened following reports from the Center for Auto Safety of possible steering problems in 1968-1973 GM passenger cars, such as steering lockup, steering binding, self-steering and loss of power assist. Most of the alleged problems in the reports were attributed to sticking or binding spool valves in the power steering assemblies. The purpose of the investigation is to determine if the alleged malfunction of the spool valve and its consequences represent potentially a safety related defect within the meaning of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION OF POWER STEERING SPOOL VALVE:

The spool valve is a component of the steering gearbox which controls the amount and the direction of the power assist force which aids the driver in steering. The spool valve consists of concentric hollow cylinders with machined ports. The ports direct the flow of oil from the power steering pump through both cylinders with minimum restriction when the steering shaft torsion bar is not stressed by a turning force. In a turn the torsion bar is deflected. This changes the relative positions of the slots in the valve spool and the valve body and directs the flow to that end of the rack piston to which the added force is applied for a given direction. Removal of the turning force permits the return of the spool valve to neutral position. This relieves the hydraulic pressure that assisted the turning force.

PROBLEM:

Failure Mode:

Reportedly the rotary valve (spool valve) in the power steering assembly may become clogged with dirt or metal particles and resist returning to center when steering torque is removed. Hydraulic pressure remains on the rack piston causing the car to continue steering in the direction originally selected by the driver. This can occur without warning during a turn.

Potential Safety Related Consequence:

The resulting loss of steering control in certain situations could cause accident and injury.

SUBJECT: 1973 CONCORD MOTORHOME (28')
POSSIBLE INADEQUATE SUSPENSION CAPACITY
ODI CASE NO. C4-27

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

This case was opened on the basis of a letter by the owner of a 1973, 28 foot Concord motorhome, manufactured by Champion Homebuilders Company. The owner alleged inadequate suspension system capacity on the vehicle and notified Congressman John E. Moss, Chairman, Subcommittee on Commerce and Finance. Investigation was initiated to determine whether the alleged condition does exist and if it is potentially a safety related defect within the meaning of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION OF SUSPENSION SYSTEM:

The suspension system, which consists of the wheels, springs, tires and axles, supports the weight of the motorhome and the load (passengers or material) it carries. It has a gross vehicle weight rating of 13,000 pounds. The 1973 28 foot Concord motorhome involved is a recreational vehicle which is reported to accommodate eight persons.

PROBLEM:

Failure Mode:

An inadequate capacity of the suspension system, front and/or rear, could result in overloading the vehicle by its owner or operator. The complaint received reported that according to the manufacturer's brochure, the subject vehicle has an unloaded front-end weight of 3,500 pounds and rear-end weight of 8,400 pounds. The gross vehicle weight rating, it was stated, is 13,000 pounds with the distribution of 4,500 pounds on the front suspension and 8,500 pounds on the rear suspension. This would indicated that any weight over 100 pounds placed on the rear suspension would create an overloaded condition. Failure of suspension system components might result.

Potential Safety Related Consequences:

Possible failure of tires, springs, axles or wheels and resulting vehicle controllability problems which could cause accident and injury.

SUBJECT: ALLEGED LOSS OF STEERING CONTROL DUE TO MALFUNCTION OF THE STEERING RACK AND PINION ASSEMBLY ON 1971-72 FORD PINTOS
ODI CASE NO. C4-28

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

This case was opened on the basis of consumer reports of steering failure. The reports indicated that the rack and pinion steering assembly on the 1971 and 1972 model year Pinto automobile manufactured by Ford Motor Company may be involved. It was alleged that steering difficulty or loss of steering control resulted. Investigation was initiated to determine whether the reported failure and its cause represent a potential safety related defect within the meaning of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION OF THE STEERING RACK AND PINION:

The steering rack and pinion steering assembly is a critical component of the steering system. In detail, the assembly's gear input shaft is connected to the steering shaft by means of a flexible cable. A pinion gear, machined on the input shaft, engages the rack and rotation of the input shaft pinion causes the rack to move laterally. A tie rod is attached to each end of the rack joint. This allows the tie rod to move with the action of the front suspension. The gear is sealed at each end with rubber bellows. In function, the rack and pinion translate the rotary motion of the steering wheel through the connecting rods to the front wheel spindles to control vehicle steering.

PROBLEM:

Failure Mode:

Based on presently available information, impact-caused bending of the rack gear in the steering rack and pinion assembly may have caused the reported steering failures.

Potential Safety Related Consequences:

Possible accident and injury resulting from steering difficulty or the loss of steering control.

SUBJECT: ALLEGED 1968-1973 AUTOLITE 4V CARBURETOR
FAST IDLE CAM FAILURE
ODI CASE NO. C4-29

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

This case was opened on the basis of a letter reporting a fatal accident, allegedly the result of a jammed throttle caused by the failure of the fast idle cam on an Autolite 4300-4V carburetor in a 1969 Lincoln Continental. Investigation was initiated to determine whether the alleged jamming of the throttle by parts of the broken fast idle cam is potentially a safety related defect within the meaning of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966.

FAST IDLE CAM DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

The fast idle cam is a component of the throttle control system of the carburetor. The cam is mounted on the shaft connecting the automatic choke to the choke plate in the carburetor and is designed to permit higher idling speeds when the engine is cold. Steps, or ramps, on the outer surface of the cam contact the fast idle lever attached to the primary throttle shaft. As the engine warms up, and the automatic choke rotates the choke plate opens, the steps on the fast idle cam successively rotate the fast idle lever toward lower engine idling speeds. Initially, the fast idle cam on the Autolite 4300-4V carburetor was molded from nylon. At a later date, the cam was molded from bakelite. The Autolite 4300-4V carburetor is used on 1968-1973 Fords, Mercurys and Lincolns.

PROBLEM:

Failure Mode:

The lobe on the nylon fast idle cam reportedly breaks off and wedges between the fast idle lever and the automatic choke housing, preventing movement of the primary throttle shaft toward lower engine speed. Any subsequent movement of the throttle shaft toward higher engine speeds further wedges the broken piece between the lever and the housing and jams the throttle.

Potential Safety Related Consequences:

Inability to decelerate when the throttle jams may result in loss of vehicle control, accident and injury.

SUBJECT: REPORTED FAILURES OF 1966 FORD B-700
SCHOOL BUS FRONT BRAKE DRUM
ODI CASE NO. C4-30

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

This case was opened following receipt of information from the State of Rhode Island concerning a school bus accident allegedly caused by front wheel brake drum failure. Visible cracks in identical type brake drums on other buses were also reported. Investigation was initiated to determine whether the alleged failures represent a potential safety related defect within the meaning of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966.

FRONT BRAKE DRUM DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

The suspect front brake drum is identified as Ford Motor Company part number B7Q1125A. It is used with front spoke wheels. Inside diameter is 14" with a 2-19/32 brake surface. Five retaining bolts secure the brake drum to the wheel. The brake drum's two-fold function during brake application is to develop the necessary torque with minimal brake pedal pressure and (2) to limit temperatures developed by friction between brake shoe lining and the drum surface.

PROBLEM:

Failure Mode:

The webbing (metal) around each of the brake drum's five (5) retaining bolt holes reportedly separates from the drum. The separated webbing remains secured to the wheel by the retaining bolts. Upon subsequent brake application, the drum splits apart and results in over travel of wheel cylinder pistons as well as loss of hydraulic fluid and braking capability.

Potential Safety Related Consequence:

Loss of braking may result in accident and injury.

Reporting Period: November-December 1973

SAFETY RELATED DEFECT INVESTIGATORY CASES
TERMINATED THIS REPORTING PERIOD

Case Number:	212
Manufacturer:	Ford Motor Company
Make:	All
Model:	Full Size
Year(s):	1965 through 1969
Possible Problems:	Alleged failure of front suspension lower control arm due to faulty design, corrosion fatigue, or manufacturing defects.
Conclusions:	Investigation concludes that the probable cause of the failure phenomenon is cumulative damage fatigue failure due to severe impact type events during the service life of the lower control arm, and that notification of 5.5 million Ford vehicle owners is not required.
Case Number:	C2-08
Manufacturer:	International Harvester Company
Make:	IHC
Model:	MA-1500 Step-In Van
Year(s):	1970 through 1971
Possible Problems:	Alleged steering oscillation problems.
Conclusions:	Information developed revealed that the original design criteria for these units as a store-to-store delivery-type vehicle was being extended, and that vehicles were being used in over-the-road operation.
Case Number:	C2-59
Manufacturer:	Volkswagen of America, Incorporated
Make:	VW
Model:	Karmann Ghia
Year(s):	1968 through 1972
Possible Problems:	Alleged explosion due to gasoline fume intrusion or raw fuel leakage into a passenger compartment.
Conclusions:	Recall campaign 73-0171, initiated by the manufacturer, precluded further NHTSA investigative action.
Case Number:	C3-21
Manufacturer:	Renault, Incorporated
Make:	Renault
Model:	R-16
Year(s):	1969 through 1970

Terminated this Reporting Period

Possible Problems: Alleged breakage of front wheel drive axle shaft universal joints may sever hydraulic brake lines.

Conclusions: Investigation revealed that failures were progressive rather than sudden or catastrophic; vibrations and noise gave drivers warning of impending failure. Owners should have universal joints checked by a qualified mechanic as soon as the noise and vibration is noticed. Investigation has failed to show that safety defect exists.

Case Number: C3-06
Manufacturer: International Harvester Company
Make: IHC
Model: DCF-400
Year(s): 1971-1972
Possible Problems: Exhaust system design allegedly allows leakage of exhaust fumes and heat intrusion into engine compartment and driver compartment.

Conclusions: The information developed during the course of this investigation fails to confirm the present existence of a safety related defect.

SUBJECTS OF CURRENT
SAFETY RELATED DEFECT INVESTIGATIONS

I. INVESTIGATIONS

DATE November/December 31, 1973

CASE	MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
051	(In Litigation)			Three-piece wheel	
098	Ford	Fairlane, Mustang	1966-1970	Drop-in fuel tank	Certain vents exposed to rupture by shifting luggage
128	Ford	Light Trucks	Various	16" two-piece wheel	Lock ring gutter failure
132	General Motors	All	1965-1966	Quadrajet carburetor	Fuel leakage at plug, resulting in fire potential
140	Ford	Mustang, Cougar	1968-1969	Seat back pivot arm	Inboard pivot failure
150	Firestone, Kelsey-Hayes and Budd	Medium Trucks	Various	RH5° wheel	Accidental explosive disassembly
161	GM, Chrysler, AMC and Ford	All	1965-1971	Power brake vacuum check valve	No power assist with failure of valve

*New investigatory cases opened this period.

Those cases listed hereon are the subjects of current safety-related investigations being conducted in accordance with NHTSA responsibilities under provisions of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966. When an investigation is begun, it should not be assumed that a defect exists; only that a safety-related problem has been reported with sufficient indication that a problem may exist to justify a formal investigation. The aim of a formal investigation is to establish whether a vehicle defect is causing the problem, and, if so, how it happens, and an evaluation of how it may be remedied. The NHTSA will make public its conclusions upon completion of each investigation. In line with the foregoing, the NHTSA solicits from the public pertinent information relating to the cases listed. By submitting such information, you make your contribution to highway safety.

SUBJECTS OF CURRENT
SAFETY RELATED DEFECT INVESTIGATIONS

I. INVESTIGATIONS

DATE November/December 31, 1973

CASE	MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
190	All Manufacturers	Travel Trailers	1965-1970	Axles, wheels and tires	Overloading of suspensions
209	General Motors (Investigation Suspended 12-31-73)	Chevrolet Biscayne	1969	Rear suspension tie rod	Failure may cause loss of vehicle control
248	International Harvester	1600, 1700S, 1800	1958-1970	Brake shoe	Shoe separation from shoe web may cause brake failure
252	General Motors	Chevrolet ½-Ton Van and Passenger Cars	1969	Steering tie rod end	Suspected fatigue failure in thread section
258.5	General Motors	Cadillac, Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Buick	1965-1969	Engine mounts	Secondary effects from shearing of engine mounts
266	Ford	Full Size	1969	Ignition switch	Poor connection between harness plug and switch
276	International Harvester	1200-D	1970	Front spring U-bolt	Breakage
278	Volkswagen	All	1965-1971	Seat and seat track	Seat track separation during accidents
282	Ford	Standard Size	Various	15 x 5 wheel	Bead seat failure
287	Ford	Galaxie	1968-1970	Front wheel spindle	Fatigue crack in heel area
291	Ford	Mercury Capri	1971	Evaporative emission system	Underhood fires due to system malfunction

SUBJECTS OF CURRENT
SAFETY RELATED DEFECT INVESTIGATIONS

I. INVESTIGATIONS

DATE November/December 31, 1973

CASE	MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
297	Firestone	GMC PD-4903 and PD-4905	1969-1970	Front tires	Excessive heat build-up fails tires
C2-05	American Motors	Jeepster	1971	Service brakes	Rear brake lock-up
C2-09	All Manufacturers	All	All	Motorcycle helmets	Units providing inadequate protection
C2-25	Ford, Chrysler, GM and International	School Bus	Pre-1966	Hydraulic brake line	Steel sydraulic brake line failure due to corrosion
C2-32	General Motors	GMC and Chevrolet Pick-Up	Various	15" single-piece wheel	Bead seat failure
C2-51	Avco Motor Homes	Grand Lodge	1971	Gas tank	Fume intrusion into electrical circuitry box
C2-53	Ford	All	1967-1971	Brake master cylinder	Failure of cylinder due to corrosion
C2-54	Norton Villiers	Commando 750	Various	Yoke	Cracking
C2-60	Volkswagen	All	Pre-1963	Heater	Engine fume intrusion into passenger compartment
C2-61	Ford	Sedan	Various	15 x 6.5 wheel	Disc failure
C3-02	Honda	CB 750, CB 500 and CB 450 (K3 and K4)	All	Gas tank filler cap	Becomes dislodged, allowing gas to be ignited

SUBJECTS OF CURRENT
SAFETY RELATED DEFECT INVESTIGATIONS

I. INVESTIGATIONS

DATE November/December 31, 1973

CASE	MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
C3-03	Chrysler	All "C" Body	1969-1972	Bulkhead electrical connector	Becomes disconnected
C3-08	American Motors (Investigation Suspended 10-31-73)	All	1971-1973	Torque control	Insufficient control on critical fasteners
C3-09	B.F. Goodrich	Tire	1967-1971	Space Saver Tire	Insufficient instructions for mounting tire to rim
C3-10	Ford	Lincoln Continental Mark IV	1972	Tie rod sleeve	Breakage
C3-11	General Motors	Cadillac	1959-1960	Steering Pitman arm	Fatigue failure causing loss of vehicle control
C3-15	Chrysler (Investigation Suspended 12-31-73)	Plymouth Valiant	1973	Upper control arm	Low or insufficient torque control
C3-17	British Leyland	Triumph TR-6	1971-1972	Fuel tank and filler neck connection	Leaks when filling tank
C3-18	General Motors	Chevrolet Impala	1969-1970	Steering wheel	Breakage at hub
C3-19	Toyota	Land Cruiser	1972	Heater hose and gas tank	Routing of hoses through vehicle interior/location of gas tank
C3-22	Volkswagen	Type I	1967-1973	Seat belt and shoulder harness	Degradation caused by battery acid contamination

SUBJECTS OF CURRENT
SAFETY RELATED DEFECT INVESTIGATIONS

I. INVESTIGATIONS

DATE November/December 31, 1973

CASE	MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
C3-27	General Motors	Chevrolet Vega	1967-1973	Steering relay rod	Lock-up due to foreign objects
C3-28	International Harvester	Scout 800-A, 800-B	1970-1973	Clutch cable	Breakage due to bending fatigue
C3-29	Ford	Mercury Capri	1971-1973	Windshield wiper arm, shaft and motor	Arm detaches from drive shaft/ motor fails due to underpower
C3-30	Harley Davidson	Model 74	Various	Gas tank	Leakage
C3-33	Ford	Mercury Capri	1971-1972	Seat belt and seat latch	Inboard seat belt abrasion by seat latch
C3-34	General Motors	Chevrolet Series 10 Truck	1969-1971	Rear axle control arm	Cracking and splitting at welds
C3-35	International Harvester	Travelall 1110 4x4	1971-1973	Steering arm ball	Movement during braking may cause loss of steering control
C3-38	Toyota	Corona	1973	Front disc brake rotors	Corrosion and glazing encountered during shipping
C3-39	Ford	Mercury Capri	1973	Fuel and evaporative line connectors	Molded tubing connectors may crack
C3-40	Skyline Corporation	19½ Foot Nomad Travel Trailer	1971	Shackle bolt	Inadequate thread engagement with lock nut
C3-41	Chrysler	All Six-Cylinder	1971-1972	Exhaust manifold	Cracking

SUBJECTS OF CURRENT
SAFETY RELATED DEFECT INVESTIGATIONS

I. INVESTIGATIONS

DATE November/December 31, 1973

CASE	MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
C3-42	Ford	B and F-500 thru 700	1967-1972	Throttle linkage	Seizure of bellcrank at firewall linkage
C3-43	General Motors	Cadillac Eldorado and Oldsmobile Toronado	1967-1970	Front wheel lugs	Incorrect torque
C4-01	Ford	B-700 School Bus Chassis	1969-1970	Right front spring	Failure of main and second leaf
C4-05	Kantwet Company	55, 56, 58	Various	Child seating system	Sharp edges may injure child
C4-06	Mack Trucks	F-700 Series	1970-1972	Tilt cab pivot lock plate	Plate breakage
C4-07	Ford	Full Size	1970-1971	Hood latch	Failure of latch mechanism
C4-08	International Harvester	1600, 1700S and 1800 Loadstar Chassis	Various	Rear axle U-bolt	Low torque
C4-09	Chrysler	Plymouth Valiant and Dodge Dart ("A" Body)	1970-1972	Brake proportioning valve	Rear wheel lock-up under normal brake operation
C4-10	Winnebago	D24 Motorhome	1970-1971	Front tires, wheels, springs and axles	Suspension ratings are possibly exceeded by unloaded weights of vehicle front ends with standard or optional equipment, plus normal occupant and luggage loads
C4-11	Action Industries	25 Foot Swinger Motorhome	1971	Front tires, wheels springs and axles	See C4-10

SUBJECTS OF CURRENT
SAFETY RELATED DEFECT INVESTIGATIONS

I. INVESTIGATIONS

DATE November/December 31, 1973

CASE	MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
C4-12	Champion Home Builders	24 Foot Motorhome	1971	Front tires, wheels, springs and axles	See C4-10
C4-13	Bendix Homes Systems	Lifetime Premier 23 Motorhome	1969-1971	Front tires, wheels, springs and axles	See C4-10
C4-14	PRF Industries	Travco 220 Motorhome	1970	Front tires, wheels, springs and axles	See C4-10
C4-15	General Motors	Cadillac	1969-1970	Air conditioner blower relay	Failure may cause overheating of electrical harness
C4-16	Daytona Sports	Daytona 500	1966-1967	Motorcycle helmet	Unit providing inadequate protection
C4-17	General Motors	GMC and Chevrolet Pick-Up	1971-1972	Steering tie rod end	Separation of ball from socket
C4-18	Ford	Torino	1969	Engine mounts	Secondary effects from shearing of engine mounts
C4-19	RV Industries	Landau 25 Foot Motor-home	1970	Front tires, wheels, springs and axles	See C4-10
C4-20	Toyota	Corona, Corolla and Celica	1971	Hood latch	Failure of secondary latch
C4-22	Ford	Pinto	1972-1973	Assembly aid tab rear wheel weld	Tab may contact tire, cutting tire.

SUBJECTS OF CURRENT
SAFETY RELATED DEFECT INVESTIGATIONS

I. INVESTIGATIONS

DATE November/December 31, 1973

CASE	MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
C4-23	General Motors	Buick Opel	1964-1971	Fuel tank and system	Fuel system integrity
C4-26*	General Motors	Cadillac	1969-1971	Power steering gear	Binding spool valve
C4-27*	Champion Home Builders	Concord 28 Foot Motorhome	1973	Gas tank location	Location and installation of gas tank may cause overloading
C4-28*	Ford	Pinto	1971-1974	Rack and pinion steering	Bending of steering assembly on wheel impact causes binding
C4-29*	Ford	All with 4-Barrel Carburetor	1968-1974	Non-metallic fast idle cam	Breakage causes jamming of throttle in open position
C4-30*	Ford	School Bus	1966-1974	Brake drum	Breakage causes loss of brakes

SUBJECTS OF CURRENT
SAFETY RELATED DEFECT INVESTIGATIONS

II. SURVEYS AND AUDITS

DATE November/December 31, 1973

CASE	MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
181.S	All Manufacturers	Various	Various	Parts Return Program	Review of various replaced parts that may contribute to a safety defect
326.S	All Manufacturers	Recreational Vehicles	Various	Axles, springs, wheels and tires	Loading of suspension exceeds component ratings
249.A	General Motors	Chevrolet Corvair	1961-1969	Heater	Recall #71-0224
A2-58	General Motors	Chevrolet	1965-1972	Engine mount restraint	Recall #71-0235
A3-04	Toyota	1200 and 1600 cc	1970-1971	Fuel system	Recall #72-0014
A3-23	General Motors	Pontiac Grand Prix	1972	Positive battery cable	Recall #72-0198
A3-24	Chrysler	Dodge Light Trucks	1972	Brake pedal shaft nut	Recall #72-0193
A3-26	Superior Coach	IHC Chassis 1600, 1603, 1700	1972	Air brake hoses	Recall #72-0255
A4-02	Ford	F-100 and F-250 Truck	1973	Right front brake hose	Recall #73-0037
A4-03	Mack Trucks	FL, FS, RL and RS with RADL 5821 or R170 Rear Axle	1966-1972	Rear axle spring clamp plate	Recall #72-0259

SUBJECTS OF CURRENT
SAFETY RELATED DEFECT INVESTIGATIONS

II. SURVEYS AND AUDITS

DATE November/December 31, 1973

CASE	MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
A4-04	International Harvester	Travelall and Pick-Up 1110 4x4	1972-1974	Front axle steering arm mounting bolts	Recall #73-0127
A4-21	Ford	Torino and Ranchero, Mercury Montego	1972	Rear axle assembly	Recall #72-0095
A4-24	Firestone	Various	Various	Radial Commander Tubeless Truck Wheel	Recall #73E-022
A4-25*	Ford	B-700-750-7000 Bus Chassis	1973	Air brake nylon tubes	Recall #73-0210

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY A.M.
February 7, 1974

NHTSA -- 19-74 (GLW)
Tel. 202-426-0670

The Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) today issued a Public Advisory to warn parents that certain children's car seats manufactured by the Questor Corporation of Toledo, Ohio, are capable of inflicting serious cuts or finger amputations to children using these seats.

The Federal Advisory warns that a number of Questor's folding child car seats -- products manufactured prior to April 1973 and sold under the brand name "Kantwet" -- have inflicted these injuries when the car seats were installed or adjusted by persons unaware of the injury hazard. NHTSA estimates that over 1 million of these pre-April 1973 car seats are currently in use. The NHTSA also notes that car seats made by other manufacturers may present the same hazard. The agency is continuing its close scrutiny of all folding child car seats.

The Safety Agency issued its warning, a NHTSA spokesman said, in conjunction with a public statement and acknowledgement by the manufacturer that certain of its pre-April 1973 car seats were defective. Questor's statement noted that all of its models constructed after March 1973 have been redesigned to remove the injury-producing mechanisms. NHTSA also stated that the Questor Corporation action, in which it "will request all retail sales outlets to place warning labels on the earlier models still in stock, came as the Government was nearing the completion of its investigation of the Kantwet models.

According to today's Advisory, the Kantwet models which might inflict injury are of fold-up design and are locked into place on the car seat by means of a locking bar. This bar activates locking mechanisms on each side

- more -

of the child seat, both of which are capable of inflicting serious cuts or of severing a child's finger unless care is exercised to prevent it. The Advisory offers the following instructions for the safe installation and adjustment of these products:

1. BEFORE placing the child in or near the seat, position the seat and lock it in place. Keep hands and fingers clear!

2. Place the child in the seat and secure him according to the manufacturer's instructions.

3. If the child seat must be removed or re-positioned, ALWAYS take care to keep the child's fingers and hands away from the seat's folding or locking parts.

Dr. James B. Gregory, NHTSA Administrator, said today's Advisory is an "urgent warning to consumers who are using the older Kantwet car seats, unaware that special caution may be necessary in order to avoid painful injury to their children." At the same time, the Administrator emphasized the life-saving role of child car seats. "While this is a serious matter for users of these particular child seats," he said, "it should not be seen as any excuse for parents to neglect or to stop using child car seats to protect their children against crash injuries.

"We want to point out once more," Gregory stated, "that some kind of restraining child seat or harness -- or an infant carrier for the very young -- is an absolute essential to safeguard our children from injury and death in highway accidents." He pointed out that national sales of children's car seats decreased by approximately 17 percent in 1972. "Good sense as well as statistics say we are going to see a sharp rise in child fatalities from highway accidents," he said, "unless this trend is reversed."

Of special importance to parents, the NHTSA says, is to know if they are already using a pre-April 1973 Kantwet child seat or are about to buy one of these early models from stocks still available in stores. All children's car seat manufacturers have been required since April 1, 1971, to label their products with the date of manufacture. On all Kantwet models this date is found on the back of each car seat.

According to the NHTSA, a pre-April 1973 Kantwet model will either carry no date at all (indicating it was manufactured before April 1971) or a date prior to April 1973.

All owners of children's car seats -- regardless of make or model -- who know of children sustaining injuries of the type cited, are urged to provide the Department of Transportation with a description of the injury,

its cause, and the make, model, and date of manufacture of the child car seat. Such reports should be sent to:

Office of Consumer Affairs
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Department of Transportation (N40-41)
400 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

##########

SPECIAL
PUBLIC ADVISORY

SUBJECT:

Alerting United States motorists and parents to risks in connection with the use of certain folding-type automobile children's car-seats which may inflict serious finger or hand injuries to children if installation and adjustment instructions are not precisely followed.

MAKE/MODEL/YEAR:

Questor Corporation Children's Car Seats, under the brand name "Kantwet", involved according to current information, are:

YEAR	MAKE/BRAND	MODEL
1969 (May through Dec.)	Questor, Kantwet	97,98,208,508,608 and 708 (discontinued)
1970 (all)	Questor, Kantwet	97,98,208,308,408, 508 and 708 (discontinued)
1971 (all	Questor, Kantwet	38,48,58,78,98,408,508, and 708 (discontinued)
1972 (all)	Questor, Kantwet	482,582,682,782,872 (redesigned for 1973)
All Years	Other Makes	

BACKGROUND:

The "Kantwet", Questor Corporation's children's car seats listed in this Bulletin, and other folding car seat products which may be of similar construction, are the focus of a continuing investigation by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. These car seats are locked into place on the automobile seat by means of a locking bar which may -- if a child is seated in the car seat before the locking bar is activated, or if care is not taken to prevent hands or fingers from being injured -- severely cut or amputate a child's fingers when the locking bar is clamped into its "lock" position.

-more-

18 incidents have been reported which include severe pinching, cutting or severing of fingers; each resulting from the error of placing children in these car seats before locking the seat in place or from locking the seat in place without making sure that fingers and hands are away from the locking mechanisms.

INTERPRETATION:

Installation instructions and use instructions provided by the manufacturer instruct users to position these seats and to lock them into place before placing the child auto passenger in them. The various moving mechanisms including the seat hinge and locking bar pass adjacent to, and against, tubes and other metal members many of which are capable of injuring fingers whether the child passenger is in the car seat or sitting next to it.

Owners and parents should be alert to this danger, taking care to follow this sequence:

(1) Before placing the child in or near the seat, position the seat and lock it in place. Keep hands and fingers clear!

(2) Then place the child in the seat and secure him according to the manufacturer's instructions.

(3) If the car seat must be removed or re-positioned, take care to keep the child's fingers and hands away from the lock mechanisms.

SPECIAL NOTE -- Design changes completed April 1, 1973:

The manufacturer, Questor Corporation of Toledo, Ohio, has notified the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that all of the "Kantwet" models listed in this Bulletin have as of April 1, 1973, been either discontinued or have undergone design changes to eliminate the threats of injury described above. The manufacturer states that all models constructed after March 1973 contain these corrective design changes and that all other models have been discontinued. All models are labeled with the date of manufacture on the back of the seat. Approximately 1,176,000 pre-April 1973 Kantwet Child Seats are estimated to be in use.

CONSUMER REQUEST:

Owners of children's car seats or parents of children who, in using car seats, have experienced injuries of this kind are urged to provide the Department of Transportation with a description of the injury, its apparent cause, and the make, model, and date of manufacture of child's car seat involved.

-more-

This information is vital to the ongoing investigation of this matter and to public safety. Such reports should be sent to:

Office of Consumer Affairs
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Department of Transportation (N40-41
400 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

################

79620

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
February 8, 1974

NHTSA -- 23-74 (HP)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation's Youths Highway Safety Advisory Committee will hold a national conference in Scottsdale, Arizona, next month, to explore new methods for improving youth involvement in traffic safety programs on a State and community level.

Two youth leaders from each of 47 States, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. will participate in the three-day conference March 29-31 at the Sheraton Scottsdale Inn.

The Youths Committee is a 15-member group appointed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Its major task is to consult with the Safety Agency on programs to attract young people in a national effort to combat highway deaths and injuries.

The Youths Committee meets in Washington, D.C. this weekend to discuss highway safety programs and complete plans for its national conference.

Dr. James B. Gregory, NHTSA Administrator, will keynote the Scottsdale Conference, and Vincent L. Tofany, President of the National Safety Council, also will address the delegates.

"I am very pleased with the enthusiasm displayed by these young people in this highway safety crusade," Dr. Gregory said. "Their major task now is to sustain the interest of State and local youth groups."

##########

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
February 15, 1974

NHTSA -- 22-74
Tel. 202-426-9550

MONTHLY

COMPLIANCE REPORT

Copies of the Compliance Test Reports listed in this summary are available for viewing in the Technical Reference Division, Room 5108, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 7th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C.

Reproduced copy of any page, or an entire report, may be purchased at the above address in accordance with the fee schedule prescribed by Part 7, 49 CFR(Public Availability of Information). Basically, the fee is established at 25¢ for each page not larger than 12 X 8 inches.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
February 15, 1974

NHTSA 24-74(PF)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation has proposed a modification of the passive belt requirements contained in Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 208, which deals with occupant crash protection. The modification would permit introduction of a passive belt system for 1975 model passenger cars.

The proposal is a result of a petition for rulemaking to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) by Volkswagen A.G. and Volkswagen of America Inc. The new passive system, which has been tested by Volkswagen, consists of a single diagonal belt for restraint of the upper torso, and an energy absorbing knee bolster.

The belt is anchored to the rear edge of the door about six inches from the top. When the door is opened, webbing pulls out of a retractor, and the belt swings forward with the door to permit access to the seat. As the door is closed, the belt positions itself around the occupant and the slack is taken up by the retractor. A single-point manual release latch mechanism, similar to that used in the present interlock system, provides emergency and special release performance for the passive seat belt system.

NHTSA officials noted that, if the proposal is adopted, the passive belt system could be used in place of the present interlock system.

Interested parties are invited to submit comments on the proposal by writing to: Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. The comment period closes on March 18, 1974.

The proposed effective date for this system would be 30 days after publication of the final rule in the Federal Register.

##############################

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE 1:15 P.M. FRIDAY
February 15, 1974

NHTSA 27-74(RC)
Tel. 202-426-9550

Under Secretary of Transportation John W. Barnum today accepted delivery of two Experimental Safety Vehicles (ESV) from Minister Toshio Yamazaki, representing the Government of Japan. Designed and manufactured by the Nissan Motor Co. and the Toyota Motor Co., in cooperation with the Japanese government, the prototype safety cars will undergo more than five months of testing by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Addressing a public ceremony in the plaza of the Department's headquarters, attended by high officials of both the Japanese and United States Governments, Congress, and the automotive industry, the Under Secretary praised the Japanese Government's intense dedication and commitment to the international ESV program.

"Quite appropriately," the Under Secretary said, "the Japanese effort has been directed toward the production of a safety vehicle in the lighter weight range in which Japan's manufacturers have wide experience. The efforts of our other foreign partners in this safety program have a similar direction. This greatly increases the value of our partnership since the energy shortage is now requiring increased emphasis on smaller and more efficient cars."

- more -

Japan is a key foreign participant in this international ESV program, and has been designing cars in the 2,000 - 2,500 pound weight range. In addition to the cars presented today to the U.S., Nissan and Toyota have each produced 9 prototypes which have been turned over to their government for testing by the Japan Automobile Research Institute (JARI). JARI is working under a $23 million Japanese Government grant to build a facility for the testing of all Japanese manufactured automobiles.

Honda is likewise working on an ESV in the 1,000 pound range but will not have a completed vehicle available for testing before the end of this year.

Foreign cooperation in the design and fabrication of compact class ESVs has been excellent, Barnum said, as typified by the Japanese contributions. Other countries participating in the program at the urging of President Nixon include the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, France, the United Kingdom and Sweden.

Last year, the Government of Italy presented the United States with a Fiat-produced ESV which has been successfully tested by NHTSA at Phoenix, Arizona.

In a related U.S. program, the Department of Transportation recently announced the awarding of more than $2 million in contracts for initial design studies on an advanced state-of-the-art Research Safety Vehicle weighing no more than 3,000 pounds, and emphasizing economy as well as safety.

Dr. James B. Gregory, Administrator of NHTSA, termed the Japanese Government's participation in the ESV program an "outstanding example" of what can be accomplished by international technology united to solve a common problem.

"We are most appreciative of these efforts," Dr. Gregory said, "and hope that more of our foreign colleagues in the ESV program will cooperate as Japan has by offering their safety car prototypes for testing."

##########

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY P.M.
February 21, 1974

NHTSA -- 21-74 (PF)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation urgently wants to know how safety experts, law enforcement agencies, the automotive industry, and the general public feel about establishing a maximum speed that manufacturers could indicate on motor vehicle speedometers. It has requested comments on that subject in special letter inquiries and in a notice in the Federal Register.

In a previous notice published in December 1970, the Department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) proposed an 85 mile per hour speedometer limitation, a 95 mph speed capability, and a system of warning lights and horns which would have operated when a car reached a speed between 81 and 85 mph.

Because of the gasoline shortage, lower highway speed limits have been imposed by the Congress with a nationwide maximum speed limit of 55 mph. In addition, figures received from 18 States where speed limits were reduced to 50 or 55 mph show a reduction of 25 percent in highway fatalities for December 1973, as compared to December 1972.

NHTSA officials now feel that in view of these early statistics, a lower speedometer limitation than that previously proposed may be advisable.

The safety agency is specifically requesting comments on the advisability of having a maximum speedometer reading rule and, if so, what the most appropriate maximum reading should be. This request for

- more -

comments does not constitute a step in the rulemaking procedure, and no final action will be taken without further opportunity for comment.

Comments should be sent to Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. The comment period closes 45 days after publication in the Federal Register.

##############################

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
March 1, 1974

NHTSA -- 25-74(GLW)
Tel. 202-426-0670

The Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issued a Consumer Protection Bulletin today to warn owners of 1971 and 1972 Chevrolet and GMC Pickup Trucks that a number of reports of tie-rod failures have been received and verified in a Federal investigation.

The Federal Safety Agency says a majority of the failures, caused by separation of the tie-rod's ball-and-socket connection to the front wheels, have occurred in off-road use. But the NHTSA says it needs more information from owners, regardless of the demand or type of work the trucks are handling.

Specifically named in today's Bulletin as having suffered tie-rod failures, and loss of vehicle control as a result, are 1971-72 Chevrolet Pickups, Models C-10, G-10, and P-10; and 1971-72 GMC Pickups, Models C-1500, G-1500, and P-1500. NHTSA explains that the tie-rod is a crucial element of the vehicle's steering system, attached at each end to the front wheels by means of ball-and-socket connections. When either of these connections fail or separate, loss of steering and vehicle control may be the result.

NHTSA advises owners of these trucks to be especially alert to any looseness in vehicle steering and to seek immediate inspection of the steering system if such a condition exists. Regular periodic inspection is advised and the replacement of worn or faulty parts is extremely important for operator safety.

-more-

Also noted in today's Bulletin are Technical Bulletins issued by General Motors' Chevrolet Division in November 1972, and for GMC Trucks in December 1972, which instructed dealer and service personnel in the proper installation of newly designed parts, replacing the original tie-rod ends whenever such service becomes necessary.

NHTSA urges all owners of 1971-72 General Motors Pickup Trucks who have experienced tie-rod end failures to provide the Department of Transportation with a report of the incident. Such reports should include the conditions under which failure occurred and its threat to occupant safety, if any; together with the make, model, model-year, and serial number of the vehicle involved. This information is vital to public safety and the completion of NHTSA's ongoing investigation.

Reports should be sent to:

Office of Consumer Affairs (N40-41)
U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

###############

SPECIAL
CONSUMER PROTECTION BULLETIN

SUBJECT:

Alerting United States Motorists to specific use-risks in connection with highway operation of certain General Motors Corporation (GM) vehicles, which may be subject to steering tie rod end separations, and inviting reports from motorists who have experienced such problems.

MAKE/MODEL/YEAR:

GM vehicles potentially involved, according to current findings, are:

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL
1971-72	Chevrolet	C-10 Pickup Truck
		G-10 " "
		P-10 " "
1971-72	GMC	C-1500 Pickup Truck
		G-1500 " "
		P-1500 " "

BACKGROUND:

The manufacturer's original equipment outer tie rod end assembly, a component of the vehicle steering system, has been reported to fail by separation of the ball-and-socket connection at the tie rod ends. The majority of the reported failures to date, are from fleet operations involving off-road uses of these vehicles. Investigation of this matter has disclosed a number of individual truck owners who have experienced the problem and who have reported loss of vehicle control, accidents and injuries.

The NHTSA has been advised of tie rod end failures by six individual owners and by fleet operators in three different States. Some failures resulted in loss of vehicle control and minor injury. GM redesigned the tie rod end in 1972. The new part became available for use on June 1, 1972. Technical service Bulletins were issued by Chevrolet on November 29, 1972, and GM on December 21, 1972, advising their service personnel of the availability of the new tie rod end and its proper installation.

INTERPRETATION:

Owners of Chevrolet and GMC pickup trucks should be alert to looseness in vehicle steering. If this condition exists, inspection by competent service personnel is advised in order to determine the condition of the tie rod end assembly. Periodic inspections are advised and appropriate corrective action is imperative.

Investigation to date points to a higher incidence of failure due to off-road, extremely heavy demand on the steering components of these vehicles. But additional owner experience - regardless of vehicle usage - is important to the prompt conclusion of the NHTSA's investigation.

CONSUMER REQUEST:

Owners of all 1971-1972 GM vehicles experiencing the tie rod end failure are urged to provide the Department of Transportation with a description of the problem and the make, model, model year and serial number of the vehicle involved. This information is vital to the ongoing investigation of this matter and to the public safety. Such reports should be sent to:

Office of Consumer Affairs
U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

##########

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

FIRST CLASS

U.S.MAIL

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY P.M.
March 1, 1974

NHTSA -- 26-74 (HP)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation said today the "Carry Seat," manufactured by Baby World Company, Inc., of Great Neck, New York, may cause severe injury to a child when the vehicle in which it is used is involved in an impact or sudden stop.

Following an investigation by the Department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the company found that the "Carry Seat" does not conform to Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 213, (Child Seating Systems) and therefore, contains a defect relating to motor vehicle safety.

The Safety Agency said the manufacturer is urging parents who own the seat to discontinue using it in motor vehicles. The Agency noted that it has no authority to force the manufacturer to recall the seat or to require the manufacturer to keep records as to the identity of its customers.

The NHTSA said the "Carry Seat" is unsafe because it does not distribute the restraining forces on both the thorax and pelvis of a child. The company said it has sold almost 400,000 "Carry Seats."

##########

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 19, 1974

NHTSA -- 28-74 (HP)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation announced today that preliminary figures from 35 States and the District of Columbia show a substantial reduction in the number of pedestrian and pedalcycle fatalities for the month of January 1974.

The data, reported to the Department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), show a total of 271 pedestrian and pedalcycle deaths compared to 396 such fatalities during January 1973.

There has been some concern expressed that the advent on January 6 of year-round Daylight Savings Time nationally, brought on by the energy shortage, could result in an increase in pedestrian fatalities, particularly in the pre-dawn period when most children are on their way to school.

The NHTSA survey for January 1974 shows a total of 255 pedestrian fatalities and 16 pedalcycle deaths. Of the 255 pedestrian victims, 49 were school age children between the ages of 5 to 19. In Janaury 1973, without Daylight Savings Time, there were 82 school age children killed in the 35 States that reported accident data. Counting pedalcycle fatalities, there were 57 school age children killed in January 1974 compared to 98 for the same month a year ago.

##########

TAD-492

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
February 22, 1974

NHTSA -- 29-74 (HP)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announced today that suit has been filed against General Motors Corporation for the company's refusal to comply with a Government directive that it notify the owners of 1959-1960 model year Cadillacs of the existence of a safety defect in the steering pitman arm of the vehicles. The action seeks injunctive relief as well as civil penalties in the amount of $400,000.

The complaint, filed in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, alleges that General Motors has violated Section 113(e)(2) and 108(a)(4) of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966 by refusing to issue the defect notifications to owners.

The steering pitman arm is a critical component of the vehicle steering system. When the pitman arm fails, directional control of the vehicle is lost.

On January 10, 1974, Dr. James B. Gregory, the NHTSA Administrator, determined that the steering pitman arms on 1959-1960 model year Cadillacs contain a defect related to motor vehicle safety. Gregory said the pitman arms have been, and are continuing to be, subject to sudden and catastrophic fatigue failure leading to loss of vehicle directional control and creating an unreasonable risk of accidents, deaths, and injuries to persons using the highways. By letter of the same date, Dr. Gregory informed General Motors of his determination and directed the company to furnish defect notifications to the purchasers of such vehicles. Section 113 of the Traffic Safety Act requires manufacturers to send defect

- more -

notifications, by certified mail, to first purchasers or subsequent warranty holders of defective vehicles.

On January 11, 1974, General Motors filed a lawsuit against Transportation Secretary Claude Brinegar, Administrator Gregory and the Department of Transportation, seeking judicial review of Dr. Gregory's defect determination. General Motors also sought a temporary restraining order enjoining the enforcement of the determination.

Judge Charles Joiner of the U. S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan granted the temporary restraining order, which was subsequently extended. As a result, the NHTSA was prohibited from filing an action to enforce its determination. However, on February 13, 1974, after a hearing, Judge Joiner lifted the temporary restraining order and denied GM's motion for a preliminary injunction, which would have further restrained enforcement of the NHTSA directive. NHTSA's enforcement action was filed in the District of Columbia on the same day that the restraint was lifted.

Judge Joiner has retained jurisdiction over the action filed by General Motors in Detroit.

##########

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

FIRST CLASS

U.S.MAIL

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY NOON
February 22, 1974

NHTSA 31-74(EP)
Tel. 202-426-9550

Individual action by those faced with a frequently embarrassing decision to prevent driving by an excessive drinker was strongly advocated today by the Federal Government's highway safety leader.

Dr. James B. Gregory, Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), made this assertion to representatives of organizations concerned with curbing the drinking driver and alcohol abuse. His remarks were delivered at a meeting at Quality Inn--Pentagon City, Arlington, Virginia.

"Our objective is to stimulate individuals to think of this problem as a matter of personal involvement and action . . . . something that deserves social and peer group discussion and attention, "Dr. Gregory said in outlining the aims of NHTSA's public education campaign now in its second year.

"We want people to begin to recognize that they can take personal actions in many social and family situations which can have a real effect in reducing the drinking driver problem, "Dr. Gregory said. "We have high hopes for this approach."

- more -

At the outset of the campaign major efforts were concentrated upon reminding the public of the magnitude of the drunk driver problem nationwide. Personal involvement in tackling the issue is the major action called for in this new campaign.

Charles F. Livingston, Director, NHTSA's Office of Alcohol Countermeasures, reported a wide distribution of pamphlets on the subject of drunk driving which had been designed for special interest groups. Those included the general public, law enforcement officials, lawyers and members of the judiciary, physicians and young drivers, ages 16-25.

The public education effort, including diversified public service advertising material for media throughout the Nation, augmented the efforts of 35 Federally funded Alcohol Safety Action Projects in as many States, Livingston noted.

"Our renewed effort now poses a challenge to every adult -- 'When a Problem Drinker Drives, it's your Problem', "Livingston said.

He acknowledged the potential of an "agonizing choice" for those who will have to confront a relative, close friend or acquaintance. The alternatives, he said, are not only increased probability of arrest and denial of the driving privilege, but, more important, a rising highway mortality and injury curve among drinkers and non-drinkers from alcohol-related crashes.

##################################

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

FIRST CLASS

U.S.MAIL

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 25, 1974

NHTSA -- 30-74 (PF)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation issued a proposal today designed to revise and substantially upgrade its Federal standard dealing with child seating systems in automobiles.

In announcing the new proposal, Dr. James B. Gregory, Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), said: "We are aware of the great concern shown by many organizations and consumer groups, as well as by the public at large, for adequate protection of children riding in automobiles. This new proposal should provide the highest level of protection the industry can devise, and should result in a product within the financial reach of the consumer."

The proposed revision of Standard No. 213 would apply to all devices used to transport children in motor vehicles. In addition to car seats, the standard would cover car beds, infant carriers, and child harnesses, which are not included in the current standard.

The proposed standard, which calls for an effective date of September 1, 1975, would substitute a series of requirements, including simulated dynamic (in-motion) crash tests, instead of the presently prescribed static tests. All child restraint systems would be subject to dynamic tests, using test dummies in frontal, lateral, and rearward impacts. Frontal impacts would be at speeds simulating 30-mile-per-hour crashes, and lateral and rearward impact would simulate 20 mph crashes against a rigid obstacle. Each restraint would be required to retain the test dummy in the system without any loss of structural integrity.

The proposed standard also contains belt requirements when belts are used as direct restraints. It would require each child restraint to be attached to the vehicle by the vehicle's belt system, or by belts supplied

- more -

by the restraint manufacturer. Bails or hooks over the seatback would be prohibited.

There are special requirements proposed for car beds. These restraints would have to be installed laterally across the vehicle seat, using the seat belt or one supplied by the seat manufacturer.

Each child restraint would be labeled with the name and address of the manufacturer, the model number, the weight and height of children who may safely use the system, and a statement that the device conforms to Federal standards. An instruction manual would also be required, explaining fully the installation of the device in an automobile, and the placement of the child in the device.

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the proposal by writing to: Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. The comment period closes on May 28, 1974.

##########

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

FIRST CLASS

U.S.MAIL

TAD-492

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE TUESDAY P.M.
February 26, 1974

NHTSA -- 32-74 (HP)
Tel. 202-426-9550

Figures for January from the 50 States show a significant reduction nationally in the number of highway fatalities, the Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announced today. There were 853 fewer deaths last month than for the corresponding period in January 1973, a reduction of almost 23 percent.

The Federal Safety Agency attributed the reduction to lowered maximum speed limits in at least half the States, voluntary action on the part of motorists in reducing speeds, and a decrease in total driving as a result of the energy shortage.

Some of the larger States with lowered maximum speed limits showed remarkable declines in January. Pennsylvania, for example, which had an estimated 217 fatalities in January 1973, had by NHTSA's report only 109 last month -- a drop of 50 percent. New Jersey was down 42 percent with 67 deaths for January 1974 compared to 117 in January 1973. New York, which showed a 46 percent reduction for December, had 151 fatalities in January 1974 as compared to 237 a year earlier -- a 36 percent decline. Florida had a 25 percent reduction with 183 deaths compared to 244 fatalities in January 1973.

Dr. James B. Gregory, NHTSA Administrator, said he is encouraged by the reduction in highway deaths. "No one is happy with the stresses brought about by the energy shortage, but the accompanying effects on highway safety should remind everyone that something can be done to reduce the slaughter that has grown over the years.

- more -

"With this increased awareness, the American public, I believe, can maintain this reduction in fatalities and can cut into the toll even more by buckling their safety belts and working effectively to keep drunk drivers off our streets and highways."

The NHTSA earlier reported a 15-20 percent drop in fatalities among those States which had reduced their speed limits in November and an overall reduction of 25 percent in the 18 States which had lower speed limits in December 1973, as compared to the corresponding months in 1972.

##########

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

FIRST CLASS

U.S.MAIL

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 1, 1974

NHTSA -- 33-74 (PF)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation has proposed a number of additional amendments to Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 121, which establishes performance and equipment requirements for vehicles equipped with air brake systems.

The proposal responds to petitions filed by vehicle and equipment manufacturers and trade associations to amend the effective date of the Standard, brake actuation times, and road and dynamometer tests applied to service brake systems and emergency stopping performance.

Written by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, (NHTSA), the Standard establishes equipment requirements for air-braked trucks, buses, and trailers, and specifies stopping performance for these vehicles as well as dynamometer requirements and brake actuation and release times.

Under the new proposal, the effective date for most trucks and buses would be delayed four months until January 1, 1975. The September 1, 1974 effective date for trailers remains unchanged. Fire fighting vehicles would be required to comply with the Standard beginning September 1, 1975. "Special permit" vehicles (those vehicles with an overall width of 108 inches or more, or a gross axle weight rating (GAWR) of 24,000 pounds or more) would be required to comply with the Standard on September 1, 1976. Vehicles with a front steerable drive axle, or a front steerable axle with a GAWR of 16,000 pounds or higher would be permitted a slightly longer stopping distance until September 1, 1975.

- more -

The proposal also would permit the use of a valve to manually reduce pressure to the front axle on trucks and buses manufactured before September 1, 1976.

Interested parties are invited to submit comments, by writing to: Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. The comment closing date is April 1, 1974.

##########

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

FIRST CLASS

U.S.MAIL

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 18, 1974

NHTSA -- 38-74 (HP)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) proposed requirements today calling for mandatory passive restraint systems, such as air cushions, in the front seats of all passenger cars manufactured on or after September 1, 1976. Lap belts would continue to be required for rear seats.

In a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that would amend Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 208, Occupant Crash Protection, the Federal Safety Agency spelled out details of the proposal.

The present three options that motor vehicle manufacturers have under the standard, including the belt interlock system, would be extended under the proposal to August 31, 1976. After that date, passenger cars would be required to provide passive protection (no action required by vehicle occupants, such as fastening a seat belt) in frontal, angular and lateral crash modes in 30-mph barrier tests.

If cars could meet a rollover test by passive means, no front seat belt systems would be required under the proposed amendments, although belt systems would be available as options, with anchorages

-more-

provided. If passenger cars could not meet a rollover test by passive means, they would be required to have lap belts at all front seating positions with a sequential warning system (visible and audible).

Dr. James B. Gregory, Administrator of the Safety Agency, said experience to date with lap-and-shoulder belts continues to support the agency's judgment that belt systems fall short of providing the best universal crash protection that can be practicably achieved with today's technology. Current data indicate that proper lap-shoulder belt usage on 1974 models is running at or below the 60 percent level.

On the other hand, Dr. Gregory said, the field experience with air cushion restraint systems continues to bear out our earlier indications that they provide excellent front and angular crash protection with reliability extremely close to 100 percent.

"We have weighed our decisions in these proposed amendments with great care and deliberation," Dr. Gregory said. "We find, on the basis of the evidence available, that passive systems, which do not depend on the cooperation of the driving public, are practicable and will provide substantially greater levels of life and injury-saving protection than active belt systems."

In its present form, Standard No. 208 has been in effect since January 1, 1972. On December 5, 1972, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, ruling in Chrysler vs. Department of Transportation, upheld the basic validity of the standard, but required the NHTSA to issue more specific dummy specifications. In so doing, the Court suspended the mandatory passive requirements of the standard that were scheduled to go into effect on August 15, 1975.

The Safety Agency published new dummy specifications, effective August 1, 1973, and finds that this dummy fully qualifies as an objective measuring instrument as required by the Court. Although the NHTSA is sponsoring additional dummy research, no dummy that would be a significant improvement over the one in existence has yet been developed.

-more-

In the Chrysler case, the Court ordered that "the effective date for the implementation of passive restraints be delayed until a reasonable time after such test specifications are issued." The NHTSA, in this proposal, is delaying the effective date for passive protection one year to September 1, 1976.

Although the NHTSA fully expects that many manufacturers will begin to install passive systems before that date, as General Motors is presently doing in three of its car lines, the 1977 model year is, in the Safety Agency's judgment, the earliest time that passive protection systems can be installed in all passenger cars sold in this country.

The proposed amendments would not require crash-deployed restraint devices for rear-seat occupants. The limited data available indicate that such devices would not be cost-effective for rear-seat occupants, because of the low occupancy rate and the protection afforded by the back of the front seat.

Manufacturers of vehicles under 10,000 pounds other than passenger cars, such as light trucks, would have to provide passive protection in those vehicles on or after September 1, 1978.

In a separate advance notice of proposed rulemaking, the NHTSA said it is considering upgrading the requirements of Standard No. 208 to provide protection for occupants in crashes at higher speeds.

Based on research conducted to date on occupant crash protection and vehicle structure, the NHTSA believes that relevant technology has advanced to the point where protection can be afforded occupants in crashes equivalent to those into a fixed barrier at higher crash speeds. The Government, therefore, is considering amending Standard 208, effective September 1, 1980, to require either 45 or 50 mph crash protection.

The NHTSA invites comments from interested persons on both the proposal to amend Standard 208 and the advance notice concerning higher speed protection requirements. Comments should be submitted to the Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5221, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. The comment period for the notice of proposed rulemaking closes on May 3, 1974, while the closing date for the advance notice is September 19, 1974.

##########

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY
March 21, 1974

NHTSA -- 36-74 (GLW)
Tel. 202-426-0670

The Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) warned some Volkswagen automobile owners today that their lap and shoulder belts may have been so weakened by battery acid contamination that the belts could be useless for crash protection.

The Federal safety agency, in a Public Advisory, said that over two million VW automobiles could be affected by the weakened belts, and that the condition may occur in all Type I (Beetles) and Type III VW's manufactured from 1968 through 1972.

According to the NHTSA, accumulated battery acid may attack the safety belts in these Volkswagen models when owners neglect to store the seat belts in the storage "clips" along the upper roof edge, or when the rear seat belts are stuffed down behind the seat. Since the storage battery in these models is located under the right hand rear seat cushion, overfilling of the battery or leakage from the battery may result in accumulations of acid on the car floor. There, its corrosive action attacks any materials allowed to come in contact with it; including clothing, skin, or personal effects of occupants.

Dr. James B. Gregory, NHTSA Administrator, stressed the need for proper storage of unused safety belts to prevent this kind of belt damage. Proper maintenance and battery service, he added, will prevent leakage of acid onto the floor of the car.

-more-

Gregory said it is "extremely important, nevertheless, to recognize that up to one-fifth of these models have been shown, in a recent survey, to have this problem." Today's advisory is designed to warn VW owners to inspect their safety belts for any evidence of battery acid damage, and to order replacement belts if the damage is there.

The advisory also urges all motorists who have experienced seat belt damage due to battery acid contamination (regardless of make or model owned) to report the fact to the Department of Transportation along with the conditions leading to the contamination. The NHTSA said the information will help in its continuing effort to identify all vehicles which might have the same problem.

Such reports should be sent to:

The Office of Consumer Affairs (N40-41)
National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration.
Department of Transportation
400 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

################

DRAFT
GLWATSON/dwc
1/28/74

SPECIAL
PUBLIC ADVISORY

SUBJECT:

Alerting United States motorists to potential failures of seat belt and shoulder belt webbing -- due to corrosive action of battery acid -- in certain Volkswagen (VW) vehicles, and suggesting preventive measures to eliminate the hazard and its causes.

MAKE/MODEL/YEAR:

Vehicles potentially affected are:

Make	Model	Year
All Volkswagens	Type I (Beetle) Type III	1968 through 1972

BACKGROUND:

Reports have been received and verified which indicate that battery acid may accumulate on the rear flooring of the VW models cited and that seat belt and/or shoulder belts allowed to come in contact with the acid are partially or wholly destroyed in respect to their tensile strength and life-saving capicity.

Surveys conducted under contract by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) have indicated as high as 20% of the subject vehicles may exhibit some degree of safety belt destruction. The total number of vehicles estimated to be in use and potentially affected is 2,386,700.

Acid contamination occurs when seat belts or shoulder belts are stored improperly when not in use and are either hanging loosely to the vehicle floor or stuffed behind the vehicles' rear seats. In either case, battery acid which may accumulate by reason of over-filling (the battery is located under the passenger side, rear seat cushion in these models) or by reason of leakage and poor maintenance, may come in contact with the belt webbing.

-more-

INTERPRETATION:

The manufacturer has provided hooks and/or clips in these vehicles to allow for the proper storage of all safety belts not in use. With or without the accumulation of corrosive substances on the vehicle floor, proper storage of the belts will prevent destructive contact or damage to them.

Since battery leakage or overflow threatens an accumulation of acid inside the passenger compartment in these VW models, proper battery maintenance and careful battery servicing is extremely important, not only for the protection of the vehicle's safety belts, but for the prevention of acid corrosion of clothing, packages, and flooring as well.

All owners of these vehicles are advised to seek immediate inspection of all belt webbing to determine if acid contamination has occurred. If it has, the affected belts should be replaced. Belts and harnesses should be inspected to assure that roller retractors are in place, in working order, and that all storage hooks remain adequate to assure proper storage of belts when not in use.

CONSUMER REQUEST:

Owners experiencing seat belt or shoulder belt failures which may have been caused by acid contamination -- regardless of the make or model automobile involved -- are urged to provide the Department of Transportation with a description of the event; including the model, model-year, and vehicle identification number. This information will greatly assist the NHTSA's continuing effort to identify all vehicles which might present this hazard to owners.

Such reports should be sent to:

Office of Consumer Affairs
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Department of Transportation (N40-41)
400 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

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

FIRST CLASS

U.S.MAIL

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
March 22, 1974

NHTSA 39-74 (PF)
Tel. 202 426-9550

The Department of Transportation today proposed a new Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard covering the total seating system. The new Standard would be a combination of existing Standards No. 202 and 207, which deal with head restraints and seating systems. It would be applicable to all motor vehicles, with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of 10,000 pounds or less, except trailers and motorcycles.

Dr. James B. Gregory, Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) said: "Consolidation of the two standards is a logical step forward. It reflects the relationship of the seat and its head restraint. It would also extend the head restraint requirements to multi-purpose vehicles, trucks, and bus driver seats, and would improve the possibility for dynamic testing of the entire seating system."

The new proposed standard would establish performance and labeling requirements for seats, head restraints, seat back latch mechanisms and seat anchorages. The head restraint requirement would be modified to ensure proper utilization, by preventing its misadjustment or removal. Permanent attachment to the seat, minimum height and several minor modifications would be added to guarantee the benefits of a well-designed and adjusted device.

The seat system requirement of present Standard No. 207 would remain, except for the acceleration test of the seat back latch mechanism. There would be a new test of forward facing seat backs that measures the back's

- more -

resistance to collapse under front-end impact. A new rear moving barrier crash test would be established to test the forward-facing seats in passenger cars, multipurpose vehicles and trucks with a GVWR of 10,000 lbs. or less. This test would require that seat adjusters or anchorages could withstand a rear impact crash of up to 30 miles per hour.

The rear moving barrier crash test would be conducted in the same way as that used in FMVSS No. 301, Fuel System Integrity. Similar loading, test conditions, and test procedures would permit simultaneous testing, thus lowering cost and complexity of certification programs.

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the proposal, by writing to: Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. The comment period closes on June 17, 1974.

The proposed effective date for the standard is September 1, 1976.

##########

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

FIRST CLASS

U.S.MAIL

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
March 22, 1974

NHTSA 40-74(PF)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Department of Transportation today announced additional test requirements for Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 301, which deals with fuel system integrity. The requirements were originally proposed in August of 1973.

Dr. James B. Gregory, Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) said: "The new test requirements which apply to all passenger cars, multipurpose vehicles, trucks and buses with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of 10,000 pounds or less, will lead to safer fuel systems, and a reduction in fires following traffic accidents which account for a significant number of fatalities and injuries each year."

The amendment to the standard specifies requirements for a rear moving barrier crash test, a lateral moving barrier crash test, and a frontal-angular barrier crash test. It deletes requirements for a previously proposed dynamic rollover test.

Fuel spillage in any barrier crash test shall not exceed one ounce from the time of crash impact until the vehicle has stopped. It shall not exceed a total spillage of five ounces in the first five minutes after cessation of motion, or one ounce in any one-minute interval for the remainder of the testing period.

The effective date of the amendment is September 1, 1975, with additional requirements effective on September 1, 1976, and September 1, 1977.

##########

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY
March 27, 1974

NHTSA 37-74(RC)
Tel. 202-426-9550

Secretary of Transportation Claude S. Brinegar today announced the appointment of 10 members to the National Motor Vehicle Safety Advisory Council. Mr. Judson Branch, Chairman of the Executive Committee Allstate Insurance, was reappointed as Chairman of the 22-member Council for a second 3-year term.

The Council, mandated by the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966, advises the Secretary on the Federal motor vehicle safety standards program administered by the Department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

New members on the Council, appointed for 3-year terms ending December 31, 1976, include:

Harry H. Brainerd, Vehicle Equipment Safety Commission, Washington, D.C.

Colver R. Briggs, Automotive Safety Planning and Research, Ford Motor Company, Dearborn, Michigan.

The Honorable John D. Caemmerer, New York State Senate, Albany, New York.

Dr. B. J. Campbell, Highway Safety Research Center, University of North Carolina, Chapell Hill, North Carolina.

Mrs. Julie Candler, Automobile Editor, WOMAN'S DAY magazine, Birmingham, Michigan.

Mr. Richard L. Day, Auto Group, Petersen Publishing Company, Los Angeles.

Mr. George Hildebrand, Professor, Automobile Design, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York.

Mr. Emmett E. Hixon, Corporate Sales, Automotive, Hercules Incoporated, Southfield, Michigan, was appointed to fill the unexpired term of the late Mr. Louis von Witte, who died December 29, 1973, after serving approximately 6 months. Mr. Hixon's term expires December 31, 1975.

Mr. Dale C. Hogue, an attorney representing the Specialty Equipment Manufacturers Association (SEMA), was reappointed for a 3-year term ending December 31, 1976.

The new and reappointed members will be sworn in during the Council's next scheduled meeting April 10-11, in Washington, D.C.

##################################

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

FIRST CLASS

U.S.MAIL

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 28, 1974

NHTSA -- 43-74 (RC)
Tel. 202-426-9550

The Nation's first Federally-funded pilot demonstration of diagnostic auto inspection for safety and emission control opened for business today in Washington, D.C.

Administered by the National Highway Traffic Safety Admin stration (NHTSA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation the project is authorized under the Motor Vehicle Information and Cost Savings Act. Title II of the Act directs the Secretary of Transportation to establish a series of diagnostic inspection demonstrations to provide accurate information on the practicality and cost effectiveness of varying diagnostic systems, along with the cost of repairs on safety and emission items which have failed to pass inspection.

Dr. James B. Gregory, Administrator of the NHTSA, underscored the value of periodic motor vehicle inspection programs in detecting defects that could cause accidents. A recently completed study by Indiana University, he pointed out, showed that vehicle defects caused at least six percent of all the accidents they investigated, and were a contributing factor in another 12 percent.

Under a $1.4 million grant from NHTSA, the Half Street Southwest Inspection Station in the District of Columbia will diagnose the inspection safety problems of automobiles submitted under the twice-yearly periodic motor vehicle inspection program required by the D.C. Government.

-more-

At the same time, voluntarily participating motorists will be offered a more extensive safety related analysis of their cars, along with an engine operating diganosis. The details in both of these specific areas are designed to assist the owners in obtaining practical information on the need and cost of repairing their cars.

The latest diagnostic equipment and methods will be employed in the project, with those most cost effective integrated into a diagnostic lane controlled and sequenced by a computer.

As more sophisticated diagnostic equipment becomes available, it will be evaluated for possible inclusion in the pilot diagnostic inspection plan.

##########

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

FIRST CLASS

U.S.MAIL

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, March 29, 1974

NHTSA -- 46-74 (BAB)
Tel. (202) 426-9550

Total highway fatalities in February were down 774 below the same month last year, according to preliminary figures announced today by the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

The 23 percent drop in fatalities equalled the reduction reported in January, and continued a trend which began last November as a result of the nationwide gasoline shortage. The total reduction in fatalities, since November, now stands at an estimated 2,600 lives.

The Administrator of the safety agency, Dr. James B. Gregory said, "Two major factors are playing a role in the downward trend in highway deaths -- reduced speed limits and less driving. We are developing data to determine the impact of each in fatality reduction.

Gregory noted that February is the fourth consecutive month in which fatalities have declined. In each month, the drop in fatalities has been greater in those States which have been observing the lower speed limits.

The attached table shows the comparative fatality figures for the individual States for February 1973 and 1974.

-more-

Estimated
Traffic Fatalities for
States Not Enforcing Lower Speed Limits 1/

State	February 1974	February 1973	Percent Change
Alabama	69	76	-9.2
Hawaii[2]	11	10	+10.0
Illinois	147	128	+14.8
Indiana	82	107	-23.4
Iowa	47	49	-4.1
Kansas	31	41	-24.4
Minnesota	50	38	+31.6
Mississippi	66	56	+17.9
Missouri	22	32	-31.3
Montana	17	20	-15.0
Nebraska	17	18	-5.6
New Mexico	28	39	-28.2
Ohio	134	114	+17.5
Oklahoma	46	43	+ 6.9
South Dakota	14	14	+7.0
Tennessee	74	92	-19.6
Wyoming	9	11	-18.2
Total	864	888	-2.7

1/ Based on effective date February 20, 1974

2/ Max Speed 55 mph by State Law

NHTSA
Research Institute
OAIDA
March 21,1974

TRAFFIC FATALITIES FEBRUARY: 1973, 1974

Year	States with Lowered Speed Limits	Other States	Total
1973	2,570	888	3,458
1974	1,791	864	2,655
% Change	-30.3	-2.7	-23.2
No. of States	33	17	50

Estimated Traffic Fatalities for States Enforcing Lower Speed Limits 1/

State	February 1974	February 1973	Percent Change
Alaska	6	3	+ 100.0
Arizona	45	63	-28.1
Arkansas	26	39	-33.3
California	205	345	-40.6
Colorado	34	38	-10.5
Connecticut	21	32	-34.4
Delaware	5	8	-37.5
Florida	165	211	-21.8
Georgia	93	129	-27.9
Idaho	19	24	-25.0
Kentucky	53	59	-10.2
Louisiana	44	65	-32.3
Maine	13	8	+62.5
Maryland	38	72	-47.2
Massachusetts	55	62	-11.3
Michigan	116	156	-25.6
Nevada	7	17	-58.8
New Hampshire	6	3	+100.0
New Jersey	60	98	-38.8
New York	118	216	-45.4
North Carolina	87	117	-25.6
North Dakota	6	9	-33.3
Oregon	39	33	+18.2
Pennsylvania	158	156	+1.3
Rhode Island	3	9	-66.7
South Carolina	40	67	-40.3
Texas*	166	278	-40.3
Utah	3	11	-72.7
Vermont	6	9	-33.3
Virginia	51	90	-43.3
Washington	41	43	-4.7
West Virginia	24	28	-14.3
Wisconsin	38	72	-47.2
Total	1,791	2,570	-30.3

1/ Based on effective date February 20, 1974.

* Revised 3/28/74

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

SPECIAL CONSUMER INQUIRY
Thursday, April 4, 1974

NHTSA 45-74 (GLW)
Tel. 202-426-0670

The Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issued a Consumer Inquiry today to speed up the Government's examination of reported automobile problems. The Federal Safety Agency is looking into the cause and frequency of possibly dangerous timing gear failures -- especially those associated with sudden loss of engine power -- and is asking auto owners to report their experience with these failures in vehicles now owned and still in highway use.

Dr. James B. Gregory, NHTSA Administrator, said a number of timing gear failures have been reported and verified but that reports involve a wide variety of makes and models.

"We need more information," Gregory said. "Rather than wait for random complaints, we're taking the initiative to get the information quickly -- from the consumer who has it." Gregory said the failures could be dangerous when they occur, but that the information on hand is "too spotty to tell us if there are specific makes and models we should be investigating, or if the whole industry needs a new performance standard in order to eliminate the problems."

-more-

The NHTSA explains that the timing gear, in most of today's automobile engines, is a small metal gear with plastic teeth. The gear and a metal timing chain function to control the engine's "spark" and valve timing. When the gear's plastic teeth wear down or are "stripped," complete loss of engine power results. The possible safety effect of such failures could be stalling in traffic. The failure would present a situation similar to running out of gas or having an ignition failure.

Today's Consumer Inquiry is the first of its kind, appealing to the public for first-hand information to speed the Federal agency's pre-investigation effort. NHTSA hopes that the usual process -- often a time consuming follow-up of complaints which fail to give crucial details -- can be speeded up with its new initiative to tap consumer experience.

The NHTSA needs the following details from automobile owners wishing to report their experience with timing gear failures:

(1) Owner's name and address.
(2) Vehicle make and model, and vehicle identification number, if possible.
(3) Engine and transmission combination.
(4) Mileage at time of timing gear failure.
(5) Immediate reaction to the failure.
(6) Any safety-related experience that accompanied the failure.

Owner reports should be mailed to:

Office of Consumer Affairs (N40-41)
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

##########

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

FIRST CLASS

U.S.MAIL