

# U. S. Department of Transportation

# news:



Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE TUESDAY  
January 3, 1978

NHTSA 1-78 (BMA)  
Tel. (202)426-0670

## VOLVO RECALL

An estimated 40,000 1975 model Volvo vehicles are being recalled for correction of two accelerator/throttle system problems which could result in the inability of the driver to control vehicle speed.

Announcement of the recall was made today by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal agency responsible for motor vehicle safety, identified the vehicles as model 240's with B20F engines, manufactured from August 1974 to May 1975. Volvo announced initiation of the recall after being notified of sticking throttle complaints received by NHTSA.

One of the problems involves the throttle cable plastic sleeve attached to the vehicle firewall. This sleeve can break, allowing a buffer spring to expand and cause an increase in engine speed. If this occurs, a motorist should immediately turn the ignition key to the "OFF" position (not the "LOCK" position) and carefully drive to the shoulder of the road.

The other problem involves fraying of the throttle cable, which could result in the cable becoming stuck at any engine speed. This condition may be noticed as a slower than normal movement of the accelerator pedal or the need to apply more pressure than usual. If such symptoms are noticed, owners should seek dealer help immediately.

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Recall correction will involve installation of a metal brace at the firewall to prevent expansion of the buffer spring, and replacement of throttle cables.

NHTSA officials urged owners to return their vehicles to dealers as soon as they get recall notices from the manufacturer.

Anyone experiencing these problems is requested to notify NHTSA; Office of Consumer Services, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590 or call the Auto Safety Hotline for these or any auto safety problems at (800)424-9393 (for Washington D.C. residents the number is 426-0123).

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

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Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590



FOR RELEASE THURSDAY  
January 5, 1978

NHTSA -- 2-78 (RHC)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

DOT ORDERS BETTER BRAKING  
FOR BUSES BY JAN. 1

Stopping performance requirements are being reinstated for all air brake equipped buses built after Jan. 1, 1978, the U. S. Department of Transportation said today.

The announcement was contained in a notice issued by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) denying petitions by several bus operators and trade associations to extend a previous suspension of the stopping performance requirements for buses. The standard requires a bus traveling at 60 miles per hour to stop without skidding in 293 feet or less.

This particular requirement of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 121 was initially suspended for buses in January 1976. The suspension has been extended twice since then. The suspension and extensions were granted, NHTSA said because of the erratic behavior of an electronically controlled antilock system manufacturers employed to meet the stopping performance requirement. The unit was the only such system initially available and time was needed for field evaluation of modified antilock hardware, and a new system introduced by a different manufacturer.

During the suspension, the federal safety agency said, the manufacturer of the new system, the AC Spark Plug Division of General Motors, became the sole supplier of antilock systems for buses. This system has shown reliability in more than 2.3 million miles of testing on intercity and transit buses.

Some bus manufacturers plan to equip their buses with antilock systems as standard equipment, in order to ensure stopping performance without skidding, NHTSA said. Others have determined that their vehicles can comply with the performance requirement without antilock systems, but will offer antilock as an option.

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# U.S. Department of Transportation

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Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590



FOR RELEASE MONDAY  
January 9, 1978

NHTSA -- 3-78 (HP)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

## DOT CHANGES HEARING LOCATION ON FUEL ECONOMY REGULATIONS

The U. S. Department of Transportation said today that it will hold a public hearing on proposed increases in the fuel economy standards for pick-up trucks, vans and other utility vehicles manufactured in model years 1980 and 1981.

The public hearing will be held January 16, in the Department of Commerce Auditorium on 14th Street between Constitution Avenue and E Street, N.W., Washington, D. C., beginning at 8:30 a.m.

This represents a change in an earlier announcement. Originally the hearing was scheduled to be held in Federal Office Building 10A, 800 Independence Avenue, S.W.

The proposed establishment of fuel economy standards for light trucks is expected to save an estimated 12 billion gallons of fuel over the lifetime of these vehicles.

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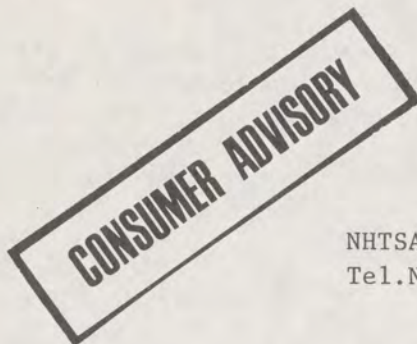
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# U. S. Department of Transportation news:



Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20590



FOR RELEASE THURSDAY  
January 12, 1978

NHTSA 4-78 (CHOR)  
Tel.No. (202)426-0670

## TWO VOLKSWAGEN RECALLS

More than 200,000 1974-1976 Volkswagen and Audi Fox model cars are being recalled to correct potentially defective accelerator cables, the U.S. Department of Transportation reported today.

In a notification letter to the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal motor vehicle safety agency, Volkswagen announced the recall of 105,000 1975-1976 Rabbits, 18,000 1975-1976 Sciroccos, 71,000 1974-1975 Dashers and 25,000 1974 Audi Fox models for the accelerator cable problem. The NHTSA has been investigating this problem since May 1977.

The agency explained the cable failures may take two forms, both affecting the driver's ability to control the car. The first failure mode is a complete break of the cable which would return the engine to idle. This could be especially dangerous if it occurs while passing or climbing a hill. The second is a partial failure, wherein the throttle can stick in the open position making it impossible to slow the car without taking it out of gear.

Volkswagen does not know how many of the recalled cars actually contain defective accelerator cables. Dealers will be instructed to inspect the cables on all recalled cars and replace the cables where necessary. VW expects to supply its dealers with parts and instructions by early February and will send out notification letters to owners at that time.

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In a separate campaign, VW is recalling 56,000 1975 Rabbits and 12,000 Sciroccos to correct a potential safety defect in the steering system. The roller bearing in the steering gear box can become dislocated, permitting excessive play in the steering system.

VW will install a bearing lock plate on all the recalled vehicles. Owners will receive notification letters when VW dealers have been supplied the necessary parts and instructions to perform the installation.

Unlike the accelerator cable problem, this defect has not been under investigation by the NHTSA.

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

# news:



Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE MONDAY  
January 16, 1978

NHTSA -- 6-78 (Cook)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

## DOT PROPOSES STANDARDIZATION OF VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

Motor vehicle identification will be strengthened and standardized under a new proposal announced today by the U. S. Department of Transportation.

The action arises from a proposal by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to amend Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 115, to specify the structure and meaning of numerals and letters used in a motor vehicle's Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).

"This is a very important proposal," said Joan Claybrook, administrator of the federal safety agency responsible for motor vehicle safety. "It will be of great value in combating auto theft and conducting efficient safety recall campaigns and for accident investigation research."

Currently, the standard requires only that a VIN be on passenger cars, be unique to a particular manufacturer in any 10 year period, and be located so that it is readable from outside the vehicle.

The proposed amendment would require manufacturers to provide a VIN that would uniquely identify each motor vehicle, without duplication, for a 30 year period.

The new VIN would contain 16 characters plus a check digit. For passenger cars, the VIN would identify the manufacturer, make and class of the vehicle, model, line, series, body type, engine type, gross vehicle weight rating, transmission type, restraint system type, and the year of manufacture. Similar information would be required for VINs on trucks, trailers, multipurpose vehicles, and motorcycles.

Beyond its value in the recovery of stolen vehicles, the VIN is important to state motor vehicle administrators, the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators, U. S. Treasury agents, and numerous other local, state, and international law enforcement agencies, NHTSA said.

The proposal has an effective date of January 1, 1980 for passenger cars and September 1, 1981 for all other vehicles.

Interested persons are invited to submit their views on the proposal by addressing comments to the Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5108, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D. C. 20590. The closing date for comments is April 17, 1978.

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# U. S. Department of Transportation news:



Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20590



FOR RELEASE MONDAY  
January 16, 1978

NHTSA 7-78 (Chor)  
Tel. (202) 426-6070

## SAAB RECALL

Saab-Scania is recalling approximately 18,000 1976 and 1977 Saab model 99 automobiles to correct potentially defective fuel lines, the U.S. Department of Transportation reported today.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Federal motor vehicle safety agency, said the fuel lines in these cars may be positioned in a way that could permit contact with the rear axle. This could rupture the fuel line creating a gas leak and fire hazard.

Saab told the safety agency it has reports of four fuel leaks attributed to this problem. However, it knows of no accidents, injuries or fires that have resulted.

The recall is being made after discovery of the problem by Saab, and owners of the recalled vehicles will receive notification letters in the near future instructing them to return to Saab dealers for replacement of the fuel hoses.

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

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Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE TUESDAY  
January 17, 1978

NHTSA -- 5-78 (Butler)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

## FUEL ECONOMY REPORT DETAILS SAVINGS TO CONSUMERS

Fuel economy standards for 1981-1984 model passenger vehicles will save an estimated 590,000 barrels of oil per day in 1985, and 1.2 million barrels per day in 1995, according to a report sent to Congress by the U. S. Department of Transportation.

By 1995, a cumulative savings of 4.3 billion barrels will be realized, approximately one-half the known reserves of Alaska's north slope oil fields. In terms of 1980 dollars, the savings are valued at approximately \$24 billion.

The report was submitted to Congress by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal agency responsible for issuance and enforcement of motor vehicle safety and fuel economy standards.

Joan Claybrook, Administrator of the safety agency said, "The report's overall conclusion is that while automobile prices may increase from changes in emission levels and safety requirements, the fuel economy standards will benefit consumers through net savings based on better gas mileage and reduced maintenance costs over the life of the cars.

"The reduced fuel consumption resulting from implementation of these new standards is a very significant segment of President Carter's energy program," she concluded.

The report, in compliance with Title V of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975, deals with fiscal year 1977 during which DOT established passenger automobile average fuel economy standards for model years 1981 through 1984, and average fuel economy standards for model year 1979 pick-up trucks, vans, and utility vehicles.

The passenger automobile average fuel economy standards for model years 1981 through 1984, published last June 30, require 22, 24, 26, and 27 miles per gallon (mpg) respectively, and were developed to help meet a Congressional mandate for a fleet average of 27.5 mpg by 1985.

Technical improvements such as lighter weight vehicles, smaller engines, and more efficient automatic transmissions are discussed in the report as a means of achieving these fleet fuel economy levels.

The 1981-1984 Passenger Automobile Fuel Economy Standards will result in cumulative gasoline cost savings in excess of \$640 per car over the life of the vehicle (assuming a constant price of 65¢ per gallon). Even including increases in the initial purchase price of vehicles, consumers who own 1981-84 model cars will save an average of \$490, compared with typical 1980 models.

Average fuel economy standards for model year 1979 published on March 14, require 17.2 mpg for light duty pickup trucks and vans, and 15.6 mpg for 4-wheel drive general utility vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of less than 6,000 pounds.

Based on this standard, NHTSA estimates annual savings of fuel for model year 1979 light trucks at 6,684 barrels per day, compared to model year 1976 levels, or 24.4 million barrels for the 10-year lifetime of those vehicles.

Proposed 1980-81 fuel economy standards for light trucks are out now for public comment. The agency will hold a public hearing on Jan. 16, to receive comments on those proposed standards. The 1984-86 passenger automobile fuel economy standards, which will be proposed by next winter, are discussed in the report under future rulemaking activities.

The Act specifically requires passenger automobile fuel economy standards of 18, 19, and 20 mpg for model years 1978, 1979, and 1980. In view of the automobile industry's progress in improving fuel economy, and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) projections, NHTSA does not expect problems for manufacturers in meeting the 1978 fuel economy standard of 18 mpg.

Copies of the report may be obtained by writing to: General Services Division, NHTSA, 400 - 7th Street, SW, Washington, D. C. 20590.

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**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY  
January 20, 1978

NHTSA 8-78 (Ames)  
Tel.No. (202)426-0670

WIRING AND FAN BLADE PROBLEMS  
RESULT IN TWO FORD RECALLS

An estimated 185,000 of the 1978 Ford Fairmont and Mercury Zephyr vehicles are being recalled for correction of a wiring problem that could result in total loss of electrical power.

In addition, almost 5,000 of Ford's 1972-1978 C-Series trucks are being recalled for replacement of engine cooling fans that may crack, resulting in separation of portions of the fan blades, damage to the radiator shroud and cab, and possible injury to persons standing near the vehicle, if breakage occurs while the engine is exposed.

Announcement of the recalls was made today by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal motor vehicle safety agency, said the Fairmont and Zephyr recall involves vehicles produced through December 20, 1977. The Ford Motor Co., which initiated the recall, estimates that 70 percent of these vehicles may have been assembled with the main wiring assembly routed against or near a support brace under the instrument panel. The wiring assembly may chafe against the brace and one or more of its component wires may become grounded. This may result in loss of power to an accessory or total loss of vehicle electrical power without warning.

Recall correction will involve installation of protective shields on the brace and repair of the main wiring assembly, if necessary.

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The truck recall involves C-Series trucks manufactured between 1972 and December 5, 1977 equipped with 361, 389, or 391 CID FT engines and AT-540 transmissions. The NHTSA initiated an investigation concerning cooling fan blade failures on these trucks after receiving failure data from the U.S. Postal Service which operates a fleet of over 1,000 model C600 Ford trucks. These fan blades are of a rigid and laminated construction joined together by spot welds. They are not the same as the "flex-fans" which are also the subject of a separate on-going NHTSA investigation, and which have already resulted in a number of recalls by various manufacturers. Recall correction will involve replacement with a service fan of new design having no laminations or spot welds.

In its notification letters to the NHTSA, the manufacturer said there were no reports of accidents or injuries due to either problem.

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**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY  
January 20, 1978

NHTSA 9-78 (Ames)  
Tel.No. (202) 426-0670

1969-1972 TOYOTAS RECALLED  
FOR FUEL TANK REPLACEMENT

More than 131,000 of the 1969-1972 Toyota Mark II coupes and sedans are being recalled for repair or replacement of fuel tanks that may be damaged by corrosion, the U.S. Department of Transportation said today.

Joan Claybrook, administrator of the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal motor vehicle safety agency, said "this recall is the result of action we took after learning that the manufacturer had recalled the same type of vehicles in Canada, because of the possibility of fuel tank leakage in the spare tire well. Since the problem was attributed to road salts used on ice and snow covered roads, we were concerned that similar problems may be occurring in Northern areas of the United States, and requested an explanation as to why vehicles in Canada were being recalled but not those in the United States."

Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc., the U.S. representative of the Japanese manufacturer, indicated the problem is caused by road salts in the spare tire well of the luggage compartment. In these vehicles, the center of the fuel tank forms the spare tire well. If salt combined with water is present for a period of time, corrosion will occur. Such corrosion may result in pin hole perforations of the fuel tank and seepage of fuel into the spare tire well.

Vehicles involved in this campaign include vehicles produced between February 1969 and December 1971. Vehicles produced for the U.S. after December 1971 use a fuel tank of different design.

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Toyota Motor Sales indicated no reports of accidents, death, or injury caused by this problem, and estimated that less than one percent of the affected vehicles will require fuel tank replacement. The recall will involve inspection of the fuel tank, repair or replacement of the tank if rust or perforation are present, and painting of the spare tire well with anti-corrosion paint.

Parts for the recall are being ordered from Japan and will be available in late February, the company said. Vehicle owners will be notified in late February or early March.

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

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FOR RELEASE TUESDAY  
January 24, 1978

NHTSA -- 11-78 (Butler)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

## **\$15 MILLION INCENTIVE GRANTS AWARDED TO STATES, TERRITORIES FOR REDUCING HIGHWAY FATALITIES**

A total of \$15 million in incentive grants is being awarded to 13 states, two territories, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia for achieving significant progress in reducing highway fatalities and fatality rates in 1976, the U. S. Department of Transportation announced today.

The awards cover calendar year 1976, the latest year for which complete mileage and fatality figures are available.

The grants were authorized by Congress to encourage the states to develop effective measures for reducing highway deaths. The incentive grants program is administered by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). NHTSA is the federal agency responsible for safety standards relating to drivers and vehicles, and with respect to highway safety, FHWA is responsible for highway design and construction standards.

States are eligible for two types of grants -- one for reduction in the fatality rate (number of highway deaths per 100 million miles of vehicle travel), and the other for reduction in the actual number of fatalities. This is the second year that both types of grants have been awarded.

The Virgin Islands, Guam, Georgia, District of Columbia, Vermont, Utah, New York, Arkansas, Florida and Idaho received both awards.

Incentive grants amount to a percentage of federal highway safety funds apportioned to the individual states.

The states and territories receiving awards for reducing the actual number of highway fatalities ranked in order of performance, and the amount of awards are:

- |                                   |                            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Virgin Islands \$131,106       | 7. New York \$2,806,817    |
| 2. Guam \$131,106                 | 8. Massachusetts \$872,855 |
| 3. Georgia \$895,738              | 9. Arkansas \$451,117      |
| 4. District of Columbia \$196,660 | 10. Florida \$1,177,778    |
| 5. Vermont \$196,660              | 11. Idaho \$244,186        |
| 6. Utah \$264,204                 | 12. New Jersey \$131,773   |

Eleven states, two territories, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia received awards for achieving the greatest reduction in their highway fatality rate in 1976, compared with the average highway fatality rate for the four previous calendar years.

- |                                   |                              |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Virgin Islands \$131,106       | 9. Arkansas \$451,117        |
| 2. Guam \$131,106                 | 10. Mississippi \$478,498    |
| 3. Georgia \$895,738              | 11. North Carolina \$935,504 |
| 4. Utah \$264,204                 | 12. Puerto Rico \$394,410    |
| 5. District of Columbia \$196,660 | 13. Tennessee \$749,022      |
| 6. Idaho \$244,186                | 14. South Carolina \$514,234 |
| 7. Florida \$1,177,778            | 15. New York \$739,777       |
| 8. Vermont \$196,660              |                              |

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Office of Public Affairs  
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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY  
FEBRUARY 1, 1978

NHTSA 13-78 (Ames)  
Tel.No. (202) 426-0670

TOYOTAS RECALLED FOR  
HEATER HOSE REPLACEMENT

## CONSUMER ADVISORY

More than 74,000 of the 1972 and 1973 Toyota Celica vehicles are being recalled for replacement of the passenger compartment heater hose, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced today.

Joan Claybrook, administrator of the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal motor vehicle safety agency, said "this recall is the result of agency action on reports of three heater hose failures in which hot coolant was sprayed on the legs of the drivers. We realize that heater hoses do wear out and need periodic replacement. However, these particular hoses failed without prior warning due to internal damage. Such sudden failure, coupled with the spraying of hot liquid on the driver's legs, could result in possible loss of vehicle control."

Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc., says the problem involves the formed inlet heater hose which is located in the passenger compartment. During the installation of the heater hose to the heater water valve, the end of the water valve pipe is connected to the curved portion of the hose. If a sharp edge exists, the inside of the hose can be scuffed, shortening its service life.

Recall correction will involve replacement of curved hoses with improved, straight hoses and removal of any sharp edges on the water pipes.

Required parts are being ordered from Japan and should be available in early March, at which time owners will be notified. This recall is an excellent reminder for all motorists to check their heater hoses because of the importance of a properly functioning heater/defroster system in the winter months.

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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY  
FEBRUARY 1, 1978

NHTSA--14-78(Ames)  
Tel.No. (202) 426-0670

SIX RECALLS OF BRITISH  
LEYLAND VEHICLES

**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

More than 250,000 Jaguars, Triumphs, and Austin Marinas are being recalled by British Leyland Motors, Inc., for correction of safety-related defects involving windshield washers and wipers, headlamp switches, throttle linkages, and fuel leaks.

Six separate recalls are involved, affecting 1969-1977 model year vehicles, with some models involved in two recalls. Announcement of the recalls was made today by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal agency responsible for motor vehicle safety, said that last August it opened safety investigations concerning windshield wiper malfunctions in 1969-1977 Triumph Spitfire, TR-6, TR-7, and Stag automobiles; and lighting system failures in 1970 through 1977 Triumph Spitfire, TR-6, and TR-7 cars. In the case of the other four recalls, the NHTSA had begun to collect and analyze problem reports and had requested the manufacturer to analyze the problems and consider recall action. NHTSA action was based on reports provided by consumers and data provided by the Center for Auto Safety.

Approximately 12,500 Jaguars are being recalled because of failure of windshield washer pumps. They include 1974-1977 models XJ6, 6L, and 6C and 1973-1977 models XJ12, 12L, and 12C. Recall correction will involve repositioning of the windshield washer pump to another location within the engine bay to improve pump performance and reduce the likelihood of pump motor failures. After inspection, pumps will be replaced, if necessary.

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Some 41,000 of the 1975-1978 Triumph TR7's will have their windshield wiper linkages checked for looseness and possible water entry into the wiper motor. Either problem could cause wiper failure.

The headlight switch recall involves approximately 108,000 Triumph vehicles, including the 1969-1973 GT6, 1963-1976 TR6, and the 1969-1974 Spitfire. All of the vehicles contain the potentially defective master headlight switch. If the switch fails, it makes it impossible to turn on the headlights. A defective switch may also turn on the headlights without the tail lights going on. The switches will be replaced.

In addition to the light switch, 1973-1976 Triumph TR6 models will have their accelerator linkages inspected and adjusted and an abutment bracket washer will be installed to avoid problems involving the throttle sticking at idle or in a partly open position; and 1971-1974 Triumph Spitfires will have their fuel hoses and fuel pump connections inspected for possible fuel leaks, with replacement hoses and clips installed as necessary. Each of these recalls involves approximately 37,000 vehicles.

Over 20,000 of the 1973 and 1974 Austin Marinas are being recalled for inspection and correction of problems involving possible fuel leaks at the fuel pump, or defective fuel tank vent hoses which may allow fumes to leak into the trunk area. New fuel tank vent hoses will be installed, if required, and fuel pump leakage will be corrected.

The manufacturer has indicated that all the recall campaigns will be launched as quickly as possible, and urged owners to bring their cars to dealers as soon as they receive notification letters, even though some of the cars involved are five or six years old.

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FOR RELEASE THURSDAY  
February 2, 1978

NHTSA -- 15-78 (Cook)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

## DOT FINDS EXPERIMENTAL BRAKE LIGHTS DRASTICALLY CUT REAR-END ACCIDENTS

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

Recently completed research under a contract awarded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) indicates that this type of accident was reduced by 54 percent in a test group of Washington, D. C. taxicabs. The cabs were experimentally equipped with brake lights mounted above the vehicle's trunk just beneath the centerline of the rear window. In addition, they were equipped with conventional brake lights.

The accident experience of these cabs was compared to a like number of taxicabs having only conventional brake lights said NHTSA, which is responsible for highway traffic safety under the U. S. Department of Transportation. All told, three promising variations of rear-lighting brake signals were evaluated in a one-year study, involving a total of 2,100 taxicabs that logged nearly 60 million miles in heavy city traffic.

Rear-end collisions account for about 25 percent of all cab accidents in Washington, D. C., and the research showed promising results in reducing daytime as well as nighttime accidents, the federal safety agency said. Only 16 percent of the daytime rear-end accidents involved cabs equipped with the center, high-mounted light, as compared to 31 percent of an equal number of "control" cabs equipped with conventional rear lights.

The nighttime figures were even better. The control group accounted for 35 percent of all nighttime rear-end accidents, whereas the center, high-mount equipped cabs were involved in only 10 percent.

Particularly significant, the Federal agency said, are the data from rear-end accidents involving struck vehicles that were stopping or moving slowly at time of impact. In such accidents there was almost complete certainty that the brake lights were illuminated just prior to or at the time of the collision. Taxicabs equipped with high-mounted lights were involved in only 2.2 percent of these accidents, whereas the control group with conventional lights was involved in 37 percent.

Even without considering injuries, these figures are impressive when translated in repair savings, NHTSA said, for they reflect not only a possible decrease in total damages to cars struck from the rear, but also a potential for an even greater savings in front-end damage by striking vehicles.

On the basis of these results, the Federal safety agency has initiated a follow-up research contract to verify and expand the applicability of the findings. This follow-on study will be conducted in a city other than Washington, D. C. using a fleet of vehicles other than taxicabs.

Interested parties are invited to attend a briefing session on the contract results on February 7, at 9:a.m., in Room 6202 of the Department of Transportation headquarters building, located at 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D. C. 20590. For further information contact Mr. Raymond Farris, Office of Driver and Pedestrian Research, NHTSA, Washington, D. C. 20590, telephone 202-426-4892.

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**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY  
February 3, 1978

NHTSA 17-78 (CHOR)  
Tel.No. (202)426-0670

## AUTO SAFETY PROBE DEALS WITH COOLING FANS, STEERING HOSES AND IGNITIONS

Three new auto safety investigations involving cooling fans, power steering hoses and ignition systems were announced today by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal motor vehicle safety agency, said it is looking into a suspected problem with power steering hoses in 1975-1977 American Motors Hornets and Gremlins equipped with six-cylinder engines.

The agency describes the problem as deterioration of a power steering hose routed too near the engine, and thus susceptible to heat damage. The hose can rupture and leak power steering fluid on the engine, creating a fire threat as well as impaired steering. The agency cited 55 complaints and more than 27 alleged fires caused by this type of failure. There are approximately 145,000 vehicles with the six-cylinder/power steering combination.

In another investigation of AMC vehicles, the NHTSA announced it is checking the electronic ignition system used in approximately 600,000 of AMC's 1975-1976 passenger cars and Jeeps. The agency said the ignition systems may be faulty and cause stalling. In addition to frequent stalling, many vehicles with power brakes and steering could experience loss of power assist, and consequently, impaired steering and stopping.

-more-

The agency has received 64 complaints about this problem and one report of an accident.

The third investigation involves approximately 200,000 flex-fans manufactured since 1973 by Kool Klutch Manufacturing Co. of Ft. Worth, a division of Eaglemotive Industries, Inc. The agency is investigating reports of breaking fan blades which could result in vehicle damage and personal injury. The Kool Klutch flex-fans are sold under the brand names Kool Flex and Imperial. The agency cited 13 complaints of flex-fan blade breakage, three involving injuries.

Anyone experiencing these problems is urged to report them by writing to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh St., SW., Washington, D.C. 20590, or by calling the agency's toll-free Auto Safety Hotline on 800-424-9393 (Washington, D.C. metropolitan area 426-0123).

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FOR RELEASE FRIDAY  
February 3, 1978

**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

NHTSA 18-78 (AMES)  
Tel.No. (202)426-0670

RECALL OF OMNI AND HORIZONS  
FOR FUEL TANK LEAKS

The U.S. Department of Transportation today announced the recall of approximately 2000 Plymouth Horizon and Dodge Omni 1978 model vehicles for replacement of leaky fuel tanks damaged during assembly.

Joan Claybrook, administrator of the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal motor vehicle safety agency, said "this recall is the result of action we initiated after receiving a report on Jan. 20 of fuel tank leakage from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. The IIHS had purchased two new Horizon vehicles for a test program and, when filling the fuel tanks, significant fuel leakage was noted."

An investigation determined that leakage was caused by a power-driven staple that had been driven through the floor pan to secure the carpet under the rear seat cushion. These staples had punctured the tank and allowed leakage.

On Jan. 20, the NHTSA notified the Chrysler Corp. of the problem and urged immediate recall action. Upon investigation, the manufacturer reported that the staple causing the problem was used as an unauthorized assembly aid at one Chrysler assembly plant. They agreed to recall the vehicles for fuel tank replacement.

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Office of Public Affairs

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FOR RELEASE MONDAY  
February 6, 1978

NHTSA -- 19-78 (Butler)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

## NHTSA TO CO-SPONSOR BICYCLE SAFETY WORKSHOPS

The first in a series of 10 nationwide workshops designed to promote public awareness and improve the effectiveness of bicycle safety programs will be held in Atlanta, Ga., Feb. 7.

The two-day workshops are being co-sponsored by the U. S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). The two federal agencies share responsibility for reducing bicycle deaths and injuries.

With almost 100 million bicycles in use today, and their popularity increasing for commuter use and recreational purposes, there is a growing need to promote bicycle safety.

Estimates put the yearly number of bicycle related deaths at 1,000 and injuries at 460,000.

During the two-day workshops, participants will share information and exchange ideas on how to achieve more effective safety programs at the state and local level.

Discussions will center on the development of comprehensive bicycle safety planning, bicycle facilities, enforcement programs and case studies.

Although geared toward regional, city and community planners, and local and federal government officials who can affect policy changes, the workshops will also be of interest to manufacturers, police officials, civic groups, and bicycle enthusiasts.

For conference information, contact: Jeffrey Weinberger, Conference Coordinator, Information Transfer Inc., 1160 Rockville Pike, Suite 202, Rockville, Md. 20852, (301) 279-7969; Vince Darago, Project Director, USER, Inc., 1647 Lamont St., N.W., D.C. 20010, (202) 483-9018; or Katie Moran, Project Officer, NHTSA, Room 5319, 400-7th St., S.W., Wash., D.C. 20590, (202) 426-4910.

At the conclusion of the 10 workshops, proceedings summaries will be available for sale to the public. To order copies, or for information on bicycle safety, write to: USCPSC, Wash., D.C. 20207, or call the CPSC's toll-free hotline, 800-638-2666 (Maryland residents only call 800-492-2937).

REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

Atlanta, GA  
Feb. 7-8  
Riviera Hyatt House

Denver, CO  
March 2-3  
Radisson-Denver Hotel

San Francisco, CA  
March 6-7  
Dunfey's Royal Coach  
Hotel (San Mateo)

Seattle, WA  
March 9-10  
Hilton Inn (Airport)

Chicago, IL  
March 16-17  
Essex Inn

Kansas City, MO  
March 20-21  
Radisson-Muehlenbach

Dallas, TX  
March 23-24  
Dunfey's Royal Coach Hotel

Boston, MA  
March 30-31  
Holiday Inn (Sommerville)

White Plains, NY  
April 3-4  
Holiday Inn (Mt. Kisco)

Baltimore, MD  
April 6-7  
Hilton-Charles Center

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

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Office of Public Affairs

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FOR RELEASE FRIDAY  
February 10, 1978

NHTSA -- 10-78 (Butler)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

## PARTS RETURN PROGRAM INSTRUMENTAL TO RECALLS

Automobile repair shops, participating in a government sponsored Parts Return Program, supplied information last year that aided 17 safety defect investigations and resulted in four major recall campaigns.

The investigations, conducted by the U. S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), resulted in two recall campaigns by Ford Motor Co. and one each by Porsche and Firestone Tire & Rubber.

The importance placed on the Parts Return Program by NHTSA, as a form of early warning system in its defects investigations, is illustrated by the recent award of certificates of appreciation to 17 shops for their participation during the past year.

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

Ten of the shops received Certificates of Appreciation for the first time: Automotive City, San Francisco, Calif.; Bob's Service Station, Hammond, Ind.; Tommy's Auto Repair, Sioux City, Iowa; McLain's Auto Repair, St. Louis, Mo.; Longbard's Exxon Station, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.; May's Auto Service, Mansfield, Ohio; Harry's Auto Service, Great Barrington, Mass.; Woody's Garage, Montoursville, Pa.; L.A.D. Auto Electric, Spokane, Wash.; and Joe's Auto Service, Appleton, Wisc.

Seven firms, recipients of prior awards, on the award list again this year, are: Hagan Service Center, Gainesville, Ga.; Ise Automotive Service, Hollywood, Calif.; Auto Hospital, Lincoln, Neb.; Kolesnik's Service Station, Rochester, N.Y.; Auto Brake Corp., Norfolk, Va.; Doyle Automotive Service, Seattle, Wash.; and Park Auto Repair, Racine, Wisc.

Participation in the voluntary program is currently limited to independent automobile repair shops which are required to meet stringent guidelines. Under the program, failed auto components discovered during the normal course of business by any of the 2,000 participating repair shops are tagged for identification and submitted to a NHTSA contractor. Only safety related components are covered.

To strengthen and broaden the program, it is being expanded to include new car dealers, high mileage automobile fleets and automotive parts suppliers, evenly distributed geographically around the country.

Anyone interested in obtaining information on how to participate in the program is urged to contact Bruce Beddow, Program Manager, Kappa Systems, Inc., 1501 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Va. 22209, (703) 527-4500.

Enrollment in the Parts Return Program, now in its seventh year, has grown from 160 after the first year of operation to more than 2,000.

The program is designed to help identify the existence of safety defects in the design, performance, construction, components, or materials of motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment. Manufacturers are required by law to conduct defect notification and recall campaigns when they discover a safety defect or when the government has determined that a safety defect exists.

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FOR RELEASE FRIDAY  
February 10, 1978

NHTSA 16-78 (Chor)  
Tel.No. (202)426-0670

DOT ANNOUNCES FIAT  
THROTTLE RECALL

Fiat Motors of North America, Inc. is recalling 26,600 of its 1975 and 1976 Fiat 131 models to correct potentially defective throttle control mechanisms, the U.S. Department of Transportation said today.

Fiat told the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal motor vehicle safety agency, that 13,968 of its 1975 and 12,632 of its 1976 Fiat 131 models are being recalled because they might contain defective throttle return springs. Defective springs could break, causing the throttle to stick in an open position and make it difficult for drivers to control the speed of their cars.

After receiving 15 reports of accelerator malfunctions from Fiat owners, the safety agency formally requested engineering data about the problem from Fiat. Fiat responded by agreeing on Jan. 17 to recall the vehicles.

Owners of the recalled cars will receive notification letters from Fiat explaining the problem and instructing them to bring the cars to their dealers for free installation of new throttle control mechanisms.

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Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20590



FOR RELEASE FRIDAY  
February 24, 1978

NHTSA 21-78 (Chor)  
(202)426-0670

## HONDA CYCLE RECALL

More than 118,000 motorcycles are being recalled by American Honda Motor Co., Inc., to correct a safety defect that could impair braking in wet weather, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Honda informed the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal motor vehicle safety agency, that it is recalling 1975-1978 models CB750F and GL 1000 cycles built with rear disc brakes. The NHTSA has been investigating reports of wet weather brake malfunctions in these motorcycles since April 1977. The agency has received 72 owner complaints and reports of 11 injuries.

The problem is described as a temporary reduction in rear brake effectiveness in rainy weather. Although normal braking efficiency resumes after a brief time, operators tend to increase pressure on the brakes when there is no initial response. As normal braking returns, this increased brake pressure may exceed the available tire traction and cause rear wheel lock-up and a potential loss of control.

Under the recall, Honda will replace the original equipment rear brake pads with new pads of an improved design. The company said it will be sending letters to owners in mid-March explaining the recall campaign, and instructing them to contact Honda motorcycle dealers to obtain the replacement rear brake pads.

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Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY  
February 24, 1978

NHTSA--23-78 (Ames)  
Tel. 202-426-0670

**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

## RECALL OF LIGHT TRUCKS BY CHRYSLER CORPORATION

The Chrysler Corp. is recalling 20,000 of its 1977 and 1978 light trucks for correction of a possible problem that could result in leakage of fuel or fuel vapors into the truck cab, the U.S. Department of Transportation was told today.

The recalled vehicles are equipped with an in-cab fuel tank and were produced from August 1976 through September 1977.

Chrysler informed the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal motor vehicle safety agency, that the fuel tanks on the involved vehicles could be subjected to excessive internal pressure due to blockage of the tank vent system. This could cause the front panel of the fuel tank to crack, permitting vapors or fuel to leak into the truck cab. No accidents or injuries have been reported due to this problem.

Owners of these vehicles will receive notification letters from Chrysler describing the potential problem and instructing them to take their vehicles to dealers for inspection, correction of any blockage, and replacement of cracked panels, if necessary.

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Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE TUESDAY  
February 28, 1978

NHTSA=22-78 (Cook)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

BRIGHT HEADLIGHTS  
PROPOSED BY DOT

New high intensity automobile headlamps that combine the best features of American and European systems have been proposed by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

An amendment to federal motor vehicle safety standard No. 108, Lamps, Reflective Devices and Associated Equipment, issued by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) would double the maximum allowable illumination intensity from the present 75,000 candlepower to 150,000 candlepower. The proposal applies to both the traditional circular and the newer rectangular systems.

"This is an ideal compromise between the use of American sealed beam light systems and a safe and economical alternative for expensive European high intensity lamps," said Joan Claybrook, administrator of NHTSA. "Our research indicates that the 150,000 candlepower level will provide increased seeing distance without creating excessive glare for oncoming vehicles. We anticipate most manufacturers will use halogen type bulbs to meet the higher allowable output."

The new halogen lamps would retain such established safety features as sealed beam construction and mechanical aiming capability, which have distinguished American headlamps from European systems over the years. In addition Claybrook said, the manufacturers of the new halogen sealed beam units have indicated they will be available at retail prices about one-third that of European headlamps, some of which are being sold illegally in this country and are currently under investigation.

Persons wishing to comment on the proposal should do so by April 10, 1978, by writing to Docket 78-5, Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5108, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590.

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Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590  
FOR RELEASE THURSDAY  
March 2, 1978

NHTSA -- 24-78 (Butler)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

## SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO RECEIVE ENERGY CONSERVATION MATERIALS

A series of five new pamphlets on energy savings in school transportation is being sent to the superintendents of the nation's 15,891 public school districts and to state directors of pupil transportation, the U. S. Department of Transportation announced today.

The five pamphlets are:

- o "Pupil Transportation and Energy Conservation" -- offers guidelines and suggestions to assist school transportation administrators in achieving better fuel economy and cost management goals.
- o "Purchasing for Fuel Economy" -- contains information such as selecting the proper size bus to meet servicing requirements. It also considers options such as diesel engines, speed governors, radial tires, and turbochargers.
- o "Driving for Fuel Economy" -- suggests fuel saving tips such as checking the oil, water level and tire pressure when gassing up, accelerating gradually to desired speeds, driving slower when the engine is cold, reducing engine idle warm-up time, and keeping accurate records of fuel consumption.
- o "Operating for Fuel Economy" -- offers advice on planning, training personnel, purchasing, operating and maintaining vehicles, and noting what other school districts are doing to increase their fleet performance.
- o "The Science of Saving Fuel" -- discusses horsepower and fuel economy, planning routes to avoid grades and hills, driving slower in inclement weather, using accessories that can help save fuel, and emphasizing preventive maintenance programs.

Distribution of the pamphlets, designed to assist school bus fleet operators in conserving fuel, is part of a program managed by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the federal agency responsible for motor vehicle safety and fuel economy standards.

More than 175 motor carriers, manufacturers, suppliers, trade associations and labor unions are working together to conserve fuel in the commercial vehicle industry, through a Joint Industry-Government Voluntary Truck and Bus Fuel Economy Program. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Energy are the federal agencies represented in the program.

NHTSA Administrator Joan Claybrook said, "We are extremely proud of the voluntary program efforts in support of energy conservation, and believe that community efforts such as these will help us reach our national goal."

An estimated 380 million gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel are used annually by 283,000 buses to transport almost 21 million school children in the United States.

Copies of the new pamphlets and of a detailed energy conservation handbook, entitled "Encouraging School Transportation Effective Energy Management," are available free of charge.

Copies of these publications can be obtained by writing to: Voluntary Truck & Bus Fuel Economy Program, U. S. Department of Energy, Washington, D. C. 20461.

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FOR RELEASE THURSDAY  
March 2, 1978

**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

NHTSA 25-78 (AMES)  
Tel. (202)426-0670

YAMAHA RECALLS 35,553 MOTORCYCLES  
TO CORRECT WHEEL LOCKUP PROBLEM

The Yamaha Motor Corp., U.S.A. is recalling 35,553 of its 1977 and 1978 motorcycles for correction of a problem that could result in sudden lockup of the transmission and rear wheel, the U.S. Department of Transportation said today.

Specific models involved in this recall are the 1977 Yamaha XS750D and XS7502D and the 1978 Yamaha XS750E and XS750SE. These motorcycles were manufactured between Feb. 1, 1976 and Dec. 31, 1977.

Yamaha told the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal motor vehicle safety agency, that the bolt that positions the shift cam could come loose and fall into the crankcase. This could happen suddenly, allowing the shift cam to move, causing simultaneous selection of two gears and immediate lockup of the rear wheel.

Owners of the affected vehicles are being notified by letter explaining the problem and instructing them to return their motorcycles to dealers.

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FOR RELEASE THURSDAY  
March 2, 1978

NHTSA -- 26-78 (Paris)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

## TRAFFIC DEATHS UP 3 PERCENT IN 1977

An estimated 46,876 people died in traffic accidents last year, an increase of 3 percent over the 1976 toll of 45,509, the U. S.

Department of Transportation announced today.

The preliminary year-end highway fatality toll is based on early reports to the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) from the 50 States and the District of Columbia. Later reports to the federal traffic safety agency by the states could change the final figure.

"Each additional highway fatality must remind us anew of the trauma and suffering many families throughout America have to endure," said Joan Claybrook, administrator of the NHTSA. "The increase last year surely reflects the fact that we must remind the public to observe the national 55 mile per hour speed limit, and to wear safety belts."

The fatality rate was 3.2 deaths per 100 million miles of travel last year, roughly equivalent to the rate in 1976. The rate remained constant despite an increase in the number of drivers and vehicles on the road. In the base statistical year of 1973, fatalities totaled 54,052, and the fatality rate was 4.1 deaths per 100 million miles of travel.

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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY  
March 8, 1978

**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

NHTSA 31-78 (Ames)  
Tel. No. (202) 426-0670



## FIRESTONE STEEL-BELTED RADIALS BEING INVESTIGATED BY DOT

A safety-related defect investigation involving Firestone 500 steel-belted radial tires was announced today by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal motor vehicle safety agency, said the investigation is the result of over 500 reports from consumers indicating blowouts, out-of-round tires, and tread separations in tires manufactured by Firestone. These include reports of 10 accidents involving two injuries.

Anyone experiencing premature tire failure with Firestone or any other brand of steel-belted radial tire is urged to report such failures by writing to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh St., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590, or by calling the agency's toll-free Auto Safety Hotline on 800-424-9393 (Washington, D.C. metropolitan area 426-0123).

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Office of Public Affairs  
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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY  
March 8, 1978

NHTSA -- 12-78  
Tel. 202-426-9550

MONTHLY  
COMPLIANCE REPORT  
FOR SEPTEMBER 1977

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, 40 CFR (Public Availability of Information). Basically, the fee is established at 25¢ for the first page and 5¢ for each additional page.

# U. S. Department of Transportation

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Office of Public Affairs

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**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

FOR 10 AM EST RELEASE  
Thursday, March 9, 1978

NHTSA -- 30-78 (Paris)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

## DOT ANNOUNCES NEW RULES TO COMBAT ODOMETER FRAUD

The U. S. Department of Transportation today announced new rulemaking actions designed to prohibit the fraudulent practice of tampering with motor vehicle odometers.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issued the regulations to combat the billion dollar fraud of rolling back odometers.

The federal safety agency also is moving to help reduce the annual theft of nearly one million cars by beefing up safety standards that would improve the security of passenger cars and other motor vehicles. The cost to society of auto theft is estimated at over \$3 billion annually.

One new motor vehicle standard issued today requires odometers to be tamper resistant and to indicate when a vehicle's cumulative mileage exceeds 100,000 miles.

The federal odometer law, which is part of the Motor Vehicle Information and Cost Savings Act, recognizes that true mileage is an important indicator of a vehicle's condition, and aids the consumer in determining the value of a car.

- more -

The new standard also sets accuracy requirements of speedometers and odometers and limits the speedometer reading to a maximum of 85 miles per hour in the 1980 model year. The numeral "55" will be highlighted on the speedometer face to remind drivers to observe the national speed limit law.

NHTSA also issued an amendment to its odometer disclosure regulations to require vehicle dealers and distributors to retain for four years disclosure statements issued by and to them. The regulation currently requires the seller of a motor vehicle to give the buyer a signed statement attesting to the accuracy of the vehicle's odometer. The retention requirement will provide consumers and enforcement agencies with the necessary documentation to prove a violation of the law.

DOT's anti-fraud and anti-theft programs are designed to protect consumers from economic crimes. Other program activities include:

- o Issuance of a new advisory to consumers on their private rights of action under the odometer law. The advisory tells them what they need to know to secure restitution under the law.

- o Amendment of the odometer disclosure regulation to make it easier for states to include odometer information on state certificates of title.

- o A proposed amendment to a federal standard (No. 115) to provide an improved and uniformed Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) code and location to simplify data retrieval and identification.

- o A proposed amendment to a federal standard (No. 114) designed to combat the most common methods of stealing vehicles. The proposal will make it much more difficult for thieves to hot wire ignition systems, jimmy door locks, duplicate ignition keys and get under the hood. In addition, a continuous warning will be sounded if the ignition key is left in the ignition after the engine is turned off and the door opened. Standard 114, which now applies to passenger cars, already requires that vehicles be unmovable when the key is removed. The NHTSA proposal will extend the requirement to light trucks and multipurpose vehicles.

o Adoption of new guidelines that would specify uniform titling procedures for states to include disposition of titles after vehicles are sold for salvage. The agency is working with the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators on these guidelines.

The NHTSA is participating in the anti-theft program with the Interagency Committee on Auto Theft Prevention. Created by the U.S. Attorney General and the Secretary of Transportation, the committee also includes representatives of the Departments of State, Commerce, and Treasury, and the Office of Management and Budget. NHTSA also is cooperating with state and local officials to solve these problems.

The federal safety agency is working with the Interagency Committee on new legislation that would permit NHTSA to issue additional standards to prevent vehicle theft, and to require the marking of major vehicle components with an identifying number.

Joan Claybrook, the federal safety chief, said "these programs should serve as powerful weapons in our battle against fraud and theft. Rolling back odometers to disguise the true vehicle mileage has cost consumers an estimated \$1 billion a year.

"The annual cost to society of auto theft is conservatively estimated at over one billion dollars but a recent study puts the cost between \$2.6 and \$3.6 billion when you include police investigations, prosecutions and court costs, among other factors.

"We are concerned, of course, with vehicle theft and its relation to safety because stolen cars are involved in accidents at a phenomenal rate -- something like 220 times the normal accident rate.

"The proposed Highway Safety Act of 1978 includes theft protection as an element of state highway safety programs. We believe that uniform state procedures on titling and theft prevention, and regulations that would license salvage dealers could significantly help us in dealing with these problems."

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# U.S. Department of Transportation

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Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY  
March 10, 1978

**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

NHTSA 32-78 (Ames)  
Tel. No. (202) 426-0670

## TWO NEW INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING FORD CARS

Two new auto safety investigations involving vehicles manufactured by the Ford Motor Co. were announced today by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

One investigation involves breakage or separation of the manual transmission, floor-mounted gear shift levers in 1971-1978 Mercury Capris, and the other deals with malfunction of the power steering control valve in 1975-1977 Granadas and Mercury Monarchs.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal motor vehicle safety agency, said the gear shift investigation involves two separate types of manual transmission levers used in 350,000 Mercury Capris. Depending on the type used, the gear shift lever may break due to fatigue, or the lever may separate from the transmission, coming out in the driver's hand. In either case, the driver will be unable to shift gears.

Failure occurs while shifting, and often when the transmission is in neutral, thus preventing the vehicle from moving.

The NHTSA has received 16 owner complaints on gear shift lever malfunctions in these vehicles. Ford reported 28 other complaints, including one accident allegedly due to the problem. The manufacturer also reported a 35 percent parts replacement rate for one of these gear shift levers, and a 19 percent parts replacement rate for the other.

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

Anyone experiencing these problems is urged to report them by writing to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590, or by calling the agency's toll-free Auto Safety Hotline on 800-424-9393 (Washington, D.C. metropolitan area 426-0123).

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Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE MONDAY  
March 13, 1978

NHTSA -- 28-78 (Cook)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

## DOT ANNOUNCES NEW PROGRAM FOR AUTO SAFETY PRIORITIES

The U. S. Department of Transportation is streamlining its motor vehicle safety rulemaking activities under a new five-year plan that gives top priority to four major areas which offer the most promise for reducing deaths and injuries on the nation's highways.

Details of the plan were unveiled today by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), which invited comment on it from industry, consumers and other interested persons.

The plan calls for concentrating safety rulemaking in the coming years in the following areas:

- o Providing better protection for occupants in side impact collisions.
- o Extending many existing motor vehicle safety standards to cover light trucks and vans.
- o Reducing pedestrian fatalities.
- o Improving braking requirements for all motor vehicles.

In the process, NHTSA intends to close out 13 pending rulemaking proceedings because of resource limitations or shortcomings in available supporting data. A number of others have been consolidated into other standard-setting activities and others require more research. Rather than scattering its resources, NHTSA plans to focus them on high-priority areas.

"This program is aimed at concentrating NHTSA's efforts on those areas that can deliver maximum improvements in safety and fuel economy," said Joan Claybrook, administrator of the federal safety agency. "It follows Secretary Adam's decision on passive restraints, which we estimate will save 9,000 lives a year. Our efforts will now address four other critical safety areas which account for at least 20,000 fatalities a year. In the face of limited resources, we are shifting funds out of programs which, although worthwhile, must necessarily be accorded lower priority, and into other areas with a higher potential to improve highway safety in the future.

"In the fuel economy area we will be putting major emphasis on research into technologies for improving fuel economy. At the same time, we will reassess the capabilities for achieving improved fuel economy in passenger automobiles."

The highest priority has been assigned to occupant protection in side crashes, which claimed 7,000 lives in 1976 (1977 figures are incomplete). Present side crash requirements will be upgraded to provide more protection, with a final rule projected for 1980.

Eventually, total occupant protection will be improved through a series of comprehensive standards providing protection in frontal, side, rear and rollover crashes. To accomplish this, NHTSA must give a high priority to developing new test dummies that can measure potential injury levels in dynamic crash tests.

NHTSA said a serious safety problem has developed from the rapid growth in light truck and van usage, with 1977 sales of more than 2.9 million, or one of every four vehicles sold. Occupant fatalities amounted to almost 5,000 in 1976 alone. This class of vehicle is not covered by many of the safety standards that apply to passenger cars. Passenger car standards, especially those related to vehicle crash-worthiness, will be expanded to include light trucks and vans.

The safety agency pointed out that more than 8,000 pedestrians were killed by motor vehicles in 1976. Research will be accelerated in this area in order to initiate rulemaking designed to require future vehicle modifications aimed at protecting pedestrians.

Braking is the fourth major area of concern, NHTSA said. In the near future, several new braking standards will be proposed, and existing standards will be upgraded for all classes of vehicles.

NHTSA will continue to explore more effective braking requirements for heavy trucks and trailers, advanced braking systems for all vehicles that could include antilock, automatic warning or actuation systems, and brake systems with a longer life. Replacement brake shoes and pads should perform as well as original equipment, NHTSA said.

The federal safety agency will continue to establish and modify fuel economy standards. A standard of 27.5 miles per gallon has already been set for Model Year (MY) 1985 passenger cars, and the program will consider raising this requirement on a schedule that will provide the manufacturers with significant time to comply.

For light duty trucks and vans, the final fuel economy standard for MY 1980 and 1981 vehicles will be issued in March 1978. Standards for 1982, 1983, and possibly 1984 will be established during 1979, and for 1984-1986 vehicles one year later.

The agency added that much research is needed to assure that manufacturers have the potential capability to improve fuel economy in these vehicles.

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Office of Public Affairs

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**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

FOR RELEASE MONDAY  
March 13, 1978

NHTSA 34-78 (Ames)  
Tel. No. (202) 426-0670

NEW BROCHURE ISSUED  
ON MOTORCYCLE HELMETS

The U.S. Department of Transportation has issued a new brochure, "Motorcycle Helmets: Claims and Facts," available to the public free of charge.

The brochure was prepared by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and provides facts that show the value of helmets in reducing fatalities and serious injuries.

In announcing availability of the publication, Joan Claybrook, NHTSA Administrator, pointed out that the use of a safety helmet reduces the likelihood of a serious or fatal head injury by one-third.

She noted that within the past two years, 22 states have repealed or weakened laws requiring helmet use by motorcyclists and that fatalities resulting from head injury have increased significantly in many of those states.

Claybrook said "data from a current study in Kansas, one of several states conducting in-depth studies of the effect of helmet law repeals, showed a 70 percent increase in head injury in Kansas between 1975 and 1976. The Kansas study also showed that the incidence of head injury was 81 percent greater for those not wearing helmets at the time of the accident than for those wearing helmets."

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A previous study in Michigan and Illinois found that helmeted riders were one-third as likely to receive a head injury as were unhelmeted riders.

In Minnesota, where the helmet law was repealed in 1977, a preliminary analysis found that fatalities during the year increased 64.9 percent, while motorcycle registrations increased only 5.7 percent. Physicians analyzing serious injury cases in Minnesota determined that head injuries occurred twice as frequently and were twice as severe among those not wearing helmets as among those wearing helmets.

Other studies are being conducted in Alabama, Colorado, and South Dakota. Results will be available in May.

The federal safety chief urged every motorcycle operator and passenger to wear a safety helmet even though it may not be required by law, pointing out that the consequences of not wearing a helmet may be death or a permanently disabling brain injury.

Single copies of the brochure can be obtained by writing to the General Services Division/Distribution, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590.

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FOR RELEASE MONDAY  
March 13, 1978

**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

NHTSA 35-78 (Ames)  
Tel.No. (202) 426-0670

## NEW BROCHURE ON TRAVEL AND CAMPER TRAILER SAFETY

The U.S. Department of Transportation has issued a new brochure on "Travel and Camper Trailer Safety" which is available to the public free of charge.

The booklet was prepared by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to provide safety guidance for owners of travel and camper trailers.

In 1977 alone, an estimated 146,000 travel trailers and 54,000 camper trailers were sold in this country. Yet, recent surveys conducted by NHTSA indicate that overloading of recreational vehicles is still a major safety problem.

The new booklet includes information on proper loading and weighing of recreational trailers, weight distribution, proper matching of towing and towed equipment, and safety tips and procedures.

Single copies of this publication can be obtained by writing to the General Services Division/Distribution, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590.

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Office of Public Affairs

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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY  
March 15, 1978

NHTSA -- 33-78 (Cook)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

## NEW TRAFFIC SAFETY FILM URGES EMERGENCY MEDICAL AID

A new 25-minute film entitled "Between Life and Death," realistically depicts how tens of thousands of lives could be saved annually through nationwide adoption of emergency response and medical service techniques.

Produced by the U.S. Department of Transportation through its highway safety agency, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the film portrays response to victims of a simulated traffic accident.

It shows the close coordination between the initial reporting of the accident by Citizens Band radio on Channel 9, the pickup of the call by a central "911" national emergency telephone number-dispatcher, police and fire protection at the scene, and quick action by emergency medical technicians.

The efficient coordination of these life-saving actions quickly transforms the victim into a stabilized patient ready for transportation to definitive medical care.

"This film is a timely demonstration of what can be done to increase the pre-hospital survival rate of traffic accident victims and victims of other medical emergencies. The crucial period is that between the first reporting of the tragedy and arrival at definitive medical care in a hospital," said Joan Claybrook, administrator of the NHTSA.

"I think it epitomizes what most states and communities can accomplish, with federal assistance, to save thousands of lives that are lost each year in traffic accidents simply because adequate emergency medical services are not being provided. When we add heart attack victims and other injuries to this list, the nationwide life-saving potential of this service is tens of thousands of people each and every year.

"For this reason, we are distributing copies of the film to all State and many local governments, and will have sufficient prints available for loan to the public" she said.

"Much work remains to be done in the field of emergency medical services," the federal safety agency administrator said, "for only one quarter of the ambulances nationwide meet national specifications, and only a few states have laws or regulations requiring ambulance service in compliance with the nationally recognized Emergency Medical Services Standards recommended by NHTSA. Additionally, methods for citizen entry into the Emergency Response System such as the universal 911 phone number, CB channel 9 monitoring, and uniform "Star of Life" symbol highway signs to inform motorists of these emergency aids are not, at present, available throughout the country."

Only a small percentage of today's physicians are trained to provide emergency room treatment for victims of emergencies, as portrayed in the film, despite the availability of funds for this purpose from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, NHTSA said.

And while more than 275,000 ambulance and emergency care personnel have been trained to the highly significant basic Emergency Medical Technician level by their individual states, only five percent of this total are trained at the higher paramedical level, the agency added.

To obtain a copy of this film on a short term, no cost, loan basis, please write to:

Association Films, Inc.  
866 3rd Avenue  
New York, New York 10022

Request the film by name, "Between Life and Death" and specify a preferred date and two alternate dates.

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

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Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY  
March 17, 1978

NHTSA -- 20-78  
Tel. 202-426-9550

MONTHLY

COMPLIANCE REPORT

FOR OCTOBER 1977

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, 40 CFR (Public Availability of Information). Basically, the fee is established at 25¢ for the first page and 5¢ for each additional page.

# U. S. Department of Transportation news:



Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY  
March 17, 1978

NHTSA -- 36-78 (Cook)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

## DOT ANNOUNCES MEETING ON AIR BRAKE ANTI-LOCK

The U.S. Department of Transportation today announced a public meeting April 24-25 to receive comment on whether the no-lockup requirement for air brakes on trailers should be suspended.

Secretary Brock Adams, citing the need for a possible suspension of the requirement for these safety units on trailers, referred to the time needed to help drivers make the transition to these systems, to train mechanics to repair them, and to allow the industry to set up a distribution system for spare parts.

"To make sure this safety regulation does what it is supposed to do, we will be calling on the trucking industry to join the department in a demonstration program that will give us final evidence on the effectiveness of the anti-lock standard," he said.

At the same time, the secretary emphasized the need for efforts to ensure the proper operation of anti-lock units on truck tractors.

The department, accordingly, has proposed a Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety regulation requiring that truck operators maintain anti-lock systems on truck tractors in fully operational status. This action will not only regain the safety brake benefits presently lost due to inoperative systems, but will test the validity of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's findings about the reasonableness of necessary anti-lock maintenance levels, the Secretary said.

The NHTSA said the scheduled hearing will be held in the Commerce Departmental Auditorium, 14th Street between Constitution Avenue and E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., beginning at 9:a.m.

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The issues for discussion will include the desirability of indefinitely suspending the no-lockup requirement for trailers, and the conduct of a demonstration program on anti-lock use with the cooperation of truck fleet owners. The program would permit the department to gather details on the frequency and cost of maintenance of the units, and to place on-board recorders on the demonstration vehicles to monitor brake system functions at all times.

Closing date for comments on the proposal is June 7, 1978. Parties who wish to comment should write to: NHTSA, Room 5108, Nassif Bldg., 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590.

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Office of Public Affairs  
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FOR RELEASE THURSDAY  
March 23, 1978

DOT FUNDS STUDY ON  
SPEED MEASURING DEVICES

NHTSA 37-78 (Reiley)  
Tel. (202) 426-0686

Performance standards for police radar and other traffic law enforcement speed measuring devices are scheduled for development during the next three-years with U. S. Department of Transportation funding.

Joan Claybrook, administrator of the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), today announced the project to be conducted by the National Bureau of Standards, Law Enforcement Standards Laboratory of the U. S. Department of Commerce. NHTSA is the federal agency responsible for highway safety, motor vehicle safety and fuel economy standards.

"The 55 mile per hour speed limit is a national law that was enacted to save lives on the highway and to conserve fuel," Claybrook said. "In the interest of achieving those objectives, the government intends to establish a list of approved speed measuring devices upon which law enforcement agencies may rely when purchasing this equipment."

Claybrook said that NHTSA is complying with a request by the International Association of Chiefs of Police for assistance in developing performance standards for various speed measuring devices, and establishment of a list of qualified products meeting the standards.

Purchase of speed measuring devices has increased significantly since the 1974 passage of the 55 mph law. NHTSA noted that more than \$6 million in federal funds was expended by police agencies for the purchase of 7,000 speed measuring devices between 1968 and 1973.

State and community traffic law enforcement agencies purchasing speed measuring devices with federal highway safety funds will be required to select equipment from the qualified products list when it is completed.

The Law Enforcement Standards Laboratory will focus its research upon the performance of speed measuring equipment commonly used in traffic law enforcement such as radar, VASCAR and odometers. Products that meet the standards developed by the Laboratory will be published in the Federal Register by NHTSA. A compliance information system is expected to provide performance data on the equipment while in actual use.

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Office of Public Affairs

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FOR RELEASE TUESDAY

March 28, 1978

Traffic Violators  
Aided by Compact

NHTSA -- 39-78 (Reiley)  
Tel. No. (202)426-0686

The U. S. Department of Transportation is urging all states to enter a model compact to process traffic violations more efficiently and with less inconvenience to nonresident motorists.

The model procedure, developed by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in conjunction with the Council of State Governments, is known as the Nonresident Violator Compact.

Joan Claybrook, administrator of NHTSA, who today announced the features of the compact, said that the procedure enables a motorist to continue on his or her way after receiving a traffic citation, rather than being required to face immediate arraignment as an out-of-state traffic violator.

Claybrook warned, however, that the cited driver's home state would be notified of the violation. If the driver fails to respond to charges by appearing for a hearing or mailing fine forfeiture, license suspension could result.

Maryland is the first state to adopt the model compact. An earlier version of the compact had been adopted by several jurisdictions: Delaware, Virginia, the District of Columbia, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, New York, and Florida. Those jurisdictions are expected to ratify the model compact. In addition, 11 mid-western states will meet shortly to confer on joining the model compact. The compact secretariat is the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators.

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When a traffic citation is issued to an out-of-state driver in a non-compact state, the driver often gets a police escort to the nearest magistrate for an immediate arraignment to answer charges. If unable to post bail, the driver can be jailed pending a hearing.

"The model compact aids the defendant by saving lost travel time, inconvenience, and related costs but, equally important, allows police more time for enforcing the 55 mile per hour national speed limit and other traffic laws," Claybrook said. She emphasized that the national speed limit "is the single most important activity a state can undertake to reduce highway deaths.

"As motorists come to realize that the 55 mile per hour speed limit will be enforced, both in the driver's home state and in other jurisdictions, nonresident traffic violations should be reduced."

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FOR RELEASE TUESDAY  
April 4, 1978

**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

NHTSA 40-78 (Ames)  
Tel.No. (202)426-0670

## BMW VEHICLES RECALLED FOR STALLING PROBLEM

Certain model 1977 and 1978 BMW vehicles sold in the United States are being recalled by the manufacturer to remedy a problem that could result in engine stalling, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced today.

The recall involves approximately 32,500 vehicles, models 320i and 320iA, manufactured through Feb. 28, 1978.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal motor vehicle safety agency, said the recall is the result of an inquiry it made to BMW of North America, Inc., of Montvale, N.J. The safety agency wanted to know about a vapor lock problem in BMW vehicles that results in stalling. At a subsequent meeting with BMW representatives, the NHTSA indicated it considers chronic vehicle stalling due to manufacturing defects to be a safety-related problem.

BMW indicated that the problem is caused by the high fuel flow rate in the fuel system of the BMW 320i cars which may, under conditions of high altitude, high temperature, or fuel contamination, lead to formation of fuel vapor bubbles inside the fuel pump. The first sign of vapor formation may be a high-pitched buzzing noise emitted by the fuel pump. These conditions can worsen until vapor formation results in rough engine running and eventual stalling.

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The manufacturer said that no accidents or injuries are known to have resulted from this condition.

The timing of the actual recall campaign has not been determined. The manufacturer indicates that the recall will involve installation of a second fuel pump with the fuel level sensor unit submerged in the right side of the tank. Newly-designed parts are expected to be available by early this fall.

Until the newly-designed parts are available, BMW will install an external dual pump modification kit, at no charge to the customer, on those cars which experience vapor lock. The company says that installation of this external kit, as requested by vehicle owners already experiencing vapor lock problems, will remedy the problem.

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Office of Public Affairs  
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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY  
April 5, 1978

NHTSA 41-78 (Cook)  
Tel: 202-426-9550

DOT MEETING APRIL 24-26  
ON FUEL ECONOMY RESEARCH

The U.S. Department of Transportation today announced a three-day meeting April 24-26 to review the latest research in improvements of automotive fuel economy.

Sponsored by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the meeting at the Sheraton National Hotel in Arlington, Va. is expected to draw some 400 participants including representatives of the federal government, foreign and domestic auto manufacturers and research organizations.

The discussion will be based on contractors' progress reports and will concentrate on factors affecting future fuel economy. The reports will summarize current knowledge in the fields of experimental cars, various engine and transmission combinations, methods of weight reduction, manufacturing and maintenance problems, economic practicability considerations, and expected consumer benefits.

Major areas to be considered include the following:

- o Integrated Test Vehicles ... Contractor progress reports on the design and fabrication of special lightweight cars, under NHTSA's Research Safety Vehicle Program. These cars, designed for the challenges of the 1980's, will be built and tested for fuel economy, emissions, performance, safety, and consumer acceptance.
- o Vehicle Weight Reduction ... American and European experience in reducing weights through design changes will be discussed, including the practical potential for automotive weight reduction in the near term, and an evaluation of advanced material applications for the long term.
- o Automobile Transmissions ... An evaluation of conventional and advanced transmission possibilities.

- o Engines ... A discussion of improving conventional spark ignition engines, both large and small, conventional as well as turbo-charged Diesels, and American experience with lightweight Diesel engines.

The meeting also will address fuel economy improvements that already have been made in auto engines, aerodynamic designs, tires, lubricants and accessories. In addition, the participants will consider the impact of automotive fuel economy standards on competition in the auto industry, consumer reaction to fuel efficient vehicles, and the expected growth in motor vehicle population.

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Office of Public Affairs  
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FOR RELEASE TUESDAY  
April 11, 1978

NHTSA 42-78 (Ames)  
Tel.No. (202)426-0670

QUARTERLY

DEFECT INVESTIGATORY CASES REPORT

FOR OCTOBER--DECEMBER 1977

During this reporting period, four new defect investigations were opened and one was terminated after the manufacturer initiated recall action. At the end of the reporting period, 68 safety-related defect investigations were in progress, including five in which an initial or final defect determination has been made. Four of the latter cases are currently in litigation.

For terminated cases, information collected during investigations is available for public viewing in the Technical Reference Division, Room 5108, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 7th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590.

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

Reporting Period: October = December, 1977

SAFETY RELATED DEFECT INVESTIGATORY CASES  
OPENED THIS REPORTING PERIOD

(Note: For all those cases listed below, investigation was initiated to determine whether an alleged problem did, in fact, exist, and whether the alleged problem constitutes a potential safety-related defect within the meaning of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966 (Act of 1966). The NHTSA objectives are to discover whether alleged problems do occur, the cause of such problems, and whether the problems result in property damage, injuries, or other safety-related problems.

In some instances, a manufacturer may recall certain vehicles or items of automotive equipment after the investigation is begun. The investigation may then be terminated based on recall action, or it may be continued to determine whether the alleged problem affects other models or other model years which should also be recalled for remedy.)

October, 1977

Case Number: C8-01  
Manufacturer: General Motors Corp.  
Make: Cadillac  
Model: Equipped with electronic fuel injection system.  
Year(s): 1975-1977

SUBJECT: Alleged engine compartment fires due to fuel leakage in the electronic fuel injection system.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

This case was opened after the NHTSA reviewed a Dealer Product Campaign Bulletin published by the General Motors Corp. The bulletin, and an accompanying letter sent to 941 owners of 1975 Cadillacs with electronic fuel injected engines, concerned the replacement of a fuel hose because of leakage which could result in engine compartment fires. Three owner complaints were also received, as well as a report from the Dade County (Florida) Fire Department concerning 16 fires in late model Cadillacs. The investigation was expanded to include 1976 and 1977 models since they had similar fuel injection systems. In October, 1977 the manufacturer announced the recall of 133,419 vehicles to correct this problem.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

Fuel hose connections to the engine fuel rail, and fuel hose connections between the gas tank and the fuel rail may leak because of hose deterioration.

Problem Symptoms: No reliable pre-failure symptoms except for possible visual indication of leakage and the smell of gasoline fumes in the engine compartment.

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Case Number: C8-02  
Manufacturer: Ford Motor Co.  
Make: Ford, Mercury, Lincoln (cars & light trucks)  
Model: With V-8 engines and C6 or FMX transmissions  
Year(s): 1973-1978

SUBJECT: Alleged jumping of transmission from the "PARK" position into "REVERSE" gear.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

The investigation was initiated after the NHTSA received two reports from the Center for Auto Safety indicating one injury and one fatality allegedly caused by this problem. When the investigation was opened combined data from NHTSA, the Center for Auto Safety, and material provided by the manufacturer indicated 31 owner complaints regarding this problem, all involving accidents. Presently, the NHTSA has reports of 39 injuries and 6 fatalities allegedly due to vehicles jumping into "REVERSE".

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

The C-6 and FMX automatic transmissions are used on vehicles equipped with V-8 engines. The vehicles within the scope of this investigation can be identified by either a "U", "X" or "Z" transmission code on the driver's door pillar. When the shift lever is placed into PARK position with the engine running, an external force such as a vehicle door slam can allegedly cause the transmission to shift from PARK to REVERSE, causing the vehicle to move backwards, unattended. This may result in accidents, injuries and property damage. The cause or causes of this occurrence have not been isolated.

Problem Symptoms: The only known pre-failure symptoms reported to date are an improper indication of the shift indicator or a binding feeling of the selector between REVERSE and PARK.

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November, 1977:

Case Number: C8-03  
Manufacturer: Peugeot, Inc.  
Make: Peugeot  
Model: 304 and 504  
Year(s): 1972-1975

SUBJECT: Alleged failure of seat belt to roll completely into retractor when the belts are not in use.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION: This investigation was prompted by a petition NHTSA received from the Center for Auto Safety.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION: If the seat belt will not roll completely into the retractor when the belts are not in use, they can become entangled in the seat adjustment mechanism or mangled in the door, thereby damaging the belt. NHTSA is concerned about the ability of the belts to protect occupants after sustained abuse.

Problem Symptoms: Failure of the seat belt to retract completely into its retractor when not in use.

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Case Number: C8-04  
Manufacturer: Ford Motor Co.  
Make: Ford, Mercury, Lincoln  
Model: Full Size and Intermediate  
Year(s): 1968-1974

SUBJECT: Alleged sticking of a bushing in the idler arm which can impair steering. Possible separation of the idler arm from the vehicle frame with resulting loss of vehicle control.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION: NHTSA received 55 reports concerning the problem. Thirty-seven of the 55 reports came through its Parts Return Program. More than 2,000 independent auto repair shops participate in the program by sending failed auto parts to a NHTSA contractor for analysis.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION: The idler arm is a component of the steering system. Complaints received indicate that a bushing in the idler arm can stick due to corrosion or lack of lubrication. If this happens, steering can become impaired and the idler arm may separate from the frame. If this happens, the driver could lose control of the vehicle.

Problem Symptoms: Increased difficulty or stiffness in steering.

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December, 1977:

None

SAFETY=RELATED DEFECT INVESTIGATORY CASES  
TERMINATED THIS REPORTING PERIOD

(Note: Information collected during these investigations is available for public viewing the NHTSA public files.)

October, 1977:

None

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November, 1977:

Case Number: C7-23  
Manufacturer: Toyota Motors  
Make: Toyota  
Model: Corona Mark II with automatic transmission  
Year(s): 1969-1972

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Possibility of electrical fire in the center console.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: The manufacturer has recalled 134,605 vehicles to correct the problem. Recall #77V-124

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for December, 1977  
Period Ending:

I. INVESTIGATIONS

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 of its existence to justify a formal investigation. The aim of the formal investigation is to establish whether a vehicle defect is causing the problem, and, if so, how it happens, and 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.

CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
128	Ford	F-250	1968-1969	16 x 5.5 Two Piece Wheel	Lock Ring Gutter Failure Could Result in Rapid Air Loss or Side Ring Leaving Wheel.
282	Ford	Ford Mercury	1965-1974	15 x 5-inch Single Piece Wheel	Alleged Wheel Rim Failure Could Result in Rapid Air Loss From Tire.
C2-32	General Motors	GMC 1/2-Ton Pickups	1960-1970	15 x 5.5-inch Single Piece Wheel	Alleged Wheel Rim Failure Could Result in Rapid Air Loss From Tire.
C2-53	Ford	All	1967 and later	Dual Master Brake Cylinder	Failure of Cylinder Due to Corrosion Could Result in Loss of Braking.
C2-60	Volkswagen	All	Pre-1963	Heater	Engine Fume Intrusion into Passenger Compartment Affects Driver's Control of Vehicle.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for  
Period Ending: December, 1977

CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
	Ford	Ford Mercury	1969-1971	15 x 6.5 Single Piece Wheel	Disc Failure Could Result In Wheel Loss.
(4)	Honda	CB 750, CB 500 CB 450 (K3 & K4)	All	Gas Tank Filler Cap	Becomes Dislodged Allowing Gas to be Ignited After Vehicle Crash.
(6)	Chrysler	All "C" Body	1969-1973	Bulkhead Electrical Connector	Becomes Disconnected Resulting In Complete Loss of Electrical Power.
	General Motors	Light Duty Trucks	1966-1971	Rear Axle Control Arm	Alleged Rear Axle Control Arm Failures Could Effect Vehicle Control.
	International Harvester	Travelall 1110 4 x 4	1972-1973	Steering Arm Ball	Alleged Steering Instability Upon Hard or Panic Brake Use Vehicle May Swerve Upon Braking Action.
	General Motors	Cadillac Eldorado & Oldsmobile	1967-1973	Front Wheel Mounting Bolts	Alleged Failure of Front Wheel Mounting Bolts Could Result in Loss of Wheels.
	Ford	Ford, Mercury	1970-1971	Hood Latch	Failure of Latch Mechanism Could Result in Hood Popup Obscuring Driver Vision.
	International Harvester	1600, 1700 and 1800 Series Loadstar Chassis	1972-1973	Rear Axle U-Bolts/Nuts	Alleged Low Torque of Rear Axle U-Bolts/Nuts Allows Axle to Shift and Could Effect Vehicle Control

HS Form 338A (Feb. 1975)

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for  
Period Ending: December, 1977

CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
C4-09	Chrysler	Dodge Darts and Plymouth Valiants	1967-1972	Brake Proportioning Valve	Rear Wheel Lockup During Braking. Could Result in Loss of Vehicle Control.
C4-10	Winnebago	D24 Motorhome	1970-1971	Front End Suspension	Alleged Inadequate Front End Suspension. Could Result in Overloading the Vehicle and Failure of Suspension System Components.
C4-11	Action Industries, Inc.	24 and 25-foot Motorhome	1971	Front End Suspension	Same as C4-10.
C4-12	Champion Home Builders	24-foot Motorhome	1971	Front End Suspension	Same as C4-10.
C4-13	Boise Cascade	Lifetime Premier 23-foot Motorhome	1969-1971	Front End Suspension	Same as C4-10.
C4-14	PRF Industries	Travco 220 Motorhome	1970	Front End Suspension	Same as C4-10.
C4-17	General Motors	Chevrolet Series C, P, G-10 Trucks and GMC Series C, P, G-1500 Trucks	1971-1972	Steering Tie Rod	Separation of Ball From Socket With Loss of Vehicle Control.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for  
Period Ending: December, 1977

CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
C4-18	Ford	Fairlane and Ranchero Mercury Montego Ford Falcon Mercury Comet	1965-1969 1965-1969 1965-1970 1965-1970	Engine Mounts	Secondary Effects from Shearing of Engine Mounts. Engine Lift and Rotation Could Depress Throttle in Open Position and Result in Loss of Control.
C4-26	General Motors	All Passenger Cars	1967-1973	Power Steering Gear	Alleged Power Steering Lockup and Self-Steering Problems. Could Result in Loss of Vehicle Control.
C4-28	Ford	All Pintos	1971-1972	Rack and Pinion Steering	Alleged Steering Difficulty or Loss of Steering Control Due to Bending of Steering Assembly Due to Wheel Impacts.
C4-29	Ford	All With 4-Barrel Carburetors	1968-1974	Non-Metallic Fast Idle Cam	Breakage Causes Jamming of Throttle in Open Position, Resulting in Loss of Control of Vehicle Speed.
C4-30	Ford	School Bus B-700	1966-1974	Brake Drum	Alleged Front Brake Drum Failure. Could Result in Loss of Braking.
C4-34	Nissan	Datsun 510 Datsun 1200	1969-1971 1971	Filler Hose and Three-Way Connector	Alleged Filler Hose and Three-Way Connector Leaks. Could Result in Loss of Fuel and Possibility of Fire.

HS Form 338A (Feb. 1975)

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for  
Period Ending: December, 1977

CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
C4-35	Nissan	Datsun 510	1968-1971	Transverse Link	Alleged Transverse Link Failures. May Result in Loss of Vehicle Control.
C4-44	General Motors	Rochester Carburetor Equipped	1965-1972	Carburetor Float	Alleged Carburetor Flooding Due to Float Saturation. Fuel Could Overflow onto Hot Engine Resulting in Fire.
C4-46	Western Auto	Wizard A-5030	Various	Auto Jack Stand	Failure to Meet Load Rating. Failure of Jack Stand While in Use Could Result in Injury to Individuals Under or Adjacent to the Vehicle.
C4-52	International Harvester	Scout II Travelall and Pickup	1970-1973	Brake Lining	Alleged Erratic Service Brake Operation or Performance. Could Affect Control During Braking.
C4-53	General Motors	Chevelle	1965-1969	Engine Mounts	Alleged Engine Mount Failure. See C4-18.
C4-59	Volkswagen	VW Type 3 prior to August 1971; Porsche 914, 1.8, 1.7 and 2.0 Liter Engine; VW Type 4, 1.7 Liter Engine	1970-1972	Bosch Fuel Injector	Alleged Electronic Fuel Injector Leakage. Could Result in Engine Compartment Fires.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for  
Period Ending: December, 1977

CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
C5-01	General Motors	Chevrolet Corvettes	1964-1974	Rear Wheel Bearing	Failure of Rear Wheel Bearings. Wheels May Bind up or Lock.
C5-03	International Harvester	Travelalls and Pickups	1974	Battery Cable	Alleged Shorting of the Positive Battery Cable. Could Cause a Spark that Ignites Flammable Materials In Engine Compartment.
C5-07	General Motors	Pontiac-all V8	1966-1972	Timing Gear and Chain	Failure of Timing Gear and Chain Resulting in Loss of Engine Power in Traffic.
C5-08	Toyota Motor Sales	Corolla and Carina Vehicle Equipped with 1600cc Engine	1971-1973	Throttle	Alleged Throttle Sticking. Could Result in Loss of Vehicle Control.
C5-09	Kar-Rite	Jack Stand Model 1052, Rated at 4,000 Pounds	All	Jack Stand	See C4-46
C5-25	Volvo	Volvo	1973	Front Bumper Bracket	Failure of Front Bumper Support Bracket. Could Result in Loss of Bumper.
C5-26	Ford	Mercury Capri	1971-1973	Seat Failures	Failure in Reclining Mechanism Allowing Seat to Rotate Rearwards and Could Result in Loss of Control.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for  
Period Ending: December, 1977

CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
C6-22	American Motors Corporation	Pacer	1975	Power Steering Gear	Alleged Leakage of Rack and Pinion Seal Resulting in Possible Loss of Steering Control.
C6-31	Ford	F-250 and F-350 Series Trucks	1972-1974	Budd Duo-Rim & "C" Section Side Ring	Alleged Explosive Separation of "C" Section Side Ring From Budd Duo-Rim Wheels. Could Result in Loss of Air Pressure, Loss of Vehicle Control, and Injury From Separated Side Ring.
C7-10	Ford	Mercury Capri	1971-1974 1976-1977	Front Stabilizer Bar	Alleged Front Stabilizer Bar Failures. Could Result in Loss of Vehicle Control.
C7-12	American Honda	750 & 1000cc Motorcycles	1975-1976	Disc Brakes	Alleged Poor Wet Braking Performance. Loss of Initial Braking While Driving in the Rain.
(7) C7-14	Volkswagen	Rabbit Scirocco Dasher Audi	1975-1976 1975-1976 1974-1975 1973-1975	Throttle Control System	Alleged Throttle Control System Malfunctions Could Result in Loss of Vehicle Control.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for  
Period Ending: December, 1977

CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS	
(3)	C7-21	General Motors	Chevrolet, Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Buick Cadillac, and GMC Trucks	1971-1977	Power Brake Booster	Power Brake Booster Failure Requires High Brake Pedal Forces to Stop Vehicle.
(4)	C7-22	Chrysler	Dart, Valiant, Aspen, Volare	1975-1977	Carburetion and Emissions System	Vehicle Stalling-Carburetion and Emissions. Could Result in Loss of Control or Accident in Traffic Situation.
(1)	C7-24	Ford	Passenger Cars and Light Trucks	1970-1977	Flex-Fan (Engine Cooling Fan)	Flex-Fan Breakage Can Result in Injury to Anyone Working Under Hood of Vehicle with Engine Operating.
(4)	C7-26	International Harvester	Heavy Trucks	1975-1977	Aluminum Hub Used on 10,800 and 12,000 Steering Axle.	Hub Cracks and Separates Between Bearings. Can Cause Damage to Braking System Elements.
	C7-30	Fiat, Inc.	All	1970-1977	Undercarriage	Suspension and Undercarriage Failure Due to Corrosion.
	C7-31	British Leyland	Triumph Spitfire, TR-7, MGB, MG Midget Jaguar XJ6, Jaguar XJ12	1975-1977 1971-1977	Ignition System	Ignition Amplifier May Fail Causing Vehicle to Stall in Traffic.

HS Form 338A (Feb. 1975)

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for  
Period Ending: December, 1977

CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
(2) C7-32	British Leyland	Triumph TR-7	1975-1977	Throttle Cable	Throttle Cable Failure Accelerator Sticks or Returns to Idle. Results in Loss of Power or Inability to Control Vehicle Speed.
C7-33	General Motors	Light Duty Trucks Chev., GMC C10, P10, K10,G20	1975-1977	Jack	Jacks May Fail When Used on Some Shoulder Inclines.
C7-34	Hollywood Accessories	Model 646	All	Hydraulic Jack	Leveling Mechanism May Fail If Load is not Centered on Jack Saddle.
(8) C7-36	British Leyland	Triumph-- All	1969 thru 1976	Wiper Motor, Linkage, Arm Blades and Switches	Failure of Wiper System During Use can Lead to Vehicle Crashes Due to Vision Obstruction.
(4) C7-37	British Leyland	Triumph-- All	1970 thru 1977	Headlamp Switches	Failure of Switch to Activate Can Result in Accidents Due to Loss of Lights When They Are Needed.
C7-38	Ford/General Motors	Pinto, Vega, Subcompact	1970- 1976	Gasoline Tank	Readily damaged in Rear-end Collision. Possibility of Fire or Explosion.
C7-39	Ford Motor	Mercury Capri	1971-1972	Headlight Switch	Switch May Fall Apart Causing Headlights and Taillights to Cease Operation.

HS Form 338A (Feb. 1975)

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for  
Period Ending: December, 1977

CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
	British Leyland	Midget	1970-1974	Throttle Cable	Throttle May Break or Stick in the Open or Partially Open Position. Results in Loss of Power or Inability to Control Vehicle Speed.
(4)	Neway Division	AR III Series, Trailer Air Suspension System	All	Pivot Bolt Connection Lock Nut	Suspension System Pivot Bolt Connection Lock Nut May Loosen Due to Insufficient Torque. The Loose Bolt Can Fall out Completely, or it Can Come Into Contact With a Tire. If The Bolt Falls Out Completely, It Can Result in Erratic Vehicle Handling. If the Bolt Contacts the Tire, It Can Result in Premature Tire Wear or a Tire Fire.
(4)	General Motors	Cadillac	1975-1977	Electronic Fuel Injection System	Engine Compartment Fires Due to Possible Fuel Leakage in Fuel Injection System.
	Ford Motor Co.	All models with 351 or Larger Engine	1973-1978	C-6 Transmission Linkage	Assembly Grommets May Fail. Transmission May Jump From Park to Reverse.
	Peugeot, Inc.	304 and 504	1972-1975	Seat Belt System	Retractor Fails to Operate Properly. Belt Becomes Damaged or Entangled.

HS Form 338A (Feb. 1975)

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for  
Period Ending: December, 1977

CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
C8-04	Ford Motor Co.	Ford, Mercury Lincoln, Full-size and Intermediate	1968-1974	Idler Arm and Mounting Bracket	Bracket Pulls Out of Frame Rail Resulting in Loss of Steering Control.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for  
Period Ending December , 1977

CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
(5) 132	General Motors (FINAL DEFECT DETERMINATION MADE 12-19-74, IN LITIGATION)	All	1965-1969	Quadrajete Carburetor	Fuel Leakage at Plug Resulting in Fire Potential
(4) 140	Ford (FINAL DEFECT DETERMINATION MADE 8-12-75, IN LITIGATION)	Mustang and Cougar	1968-1969	Seat Back Pivot Arm	Inboard Pivot Failures. Seat Back Could Collapse Resulting in Loss of Vehicle Control
C3-11	General Motors (IN LITIGATION 2-13-74)	Cadillac	1959-1960	Steering Pitman Arm	Fatigue Failure Causing Loss of Vehicle Control
C3-29	Ford (FINAL DEFECT DETERMINATION MADE 12-30-75, IN LITIGATION)	Mercury Capri	1971-1973	Windshield Wiper Arm Shaft and Motor	Arm Detaches From Drive Shaft Motor; Failure Due to Underpower. Could Result in Loss of Driver Visibility.
(2) C4-23	General Motors (INITIAL DEFECT DETERMINATION MADE 2-14-77)	Buick Opel	1964-1971	Fuel Tank and System	Taillight Mounting Bolt can Penetrate Fuel Tank in Right Rear-end Impacts at Speeds Below 10 mph.

HS Form 338A (Feb. 1975)

- (1) The manufacturer has recalled certain 1972, 1976, and 1977 model vehicles.
- (2) Manufacturer has notified NHTSA of his intent to initiate owner notification and recall.
- (3) Manufacturer has recalled 1976 model vehicles.
- (4) Vehicles have been recalled by the manufacturer.
- (5) GM did not comply with 1974 recall order and filed suit to have it declared null and void. The NHTSA brought suit to enforce the order and impose a civil penalty. In 1976, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia granted the government's motion for summary judgement, and fined GM \$400,000. In Oct. 1976, GM notified the NHTSA that it would take recall action; however, GM appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia arguing that summary judgment was inappropriate, the defect does not -- or at least may not -- pose an unreasonable risk of accidents and injuries, and challenged the penalty levied by the District Court. On October 14, 1977, the U.S. Court of Appeals affirmed the decision of the District Court with respect to the existence of a safety defect, but remanded the case to the District Court for reconsideration as to the appropriate penalty to be levied against GM.
- (6) Manufacturer has recalled 1972 and some 1973 models.
- (7) Manufacturer has recalled 1974-1976 Volkswagen and Audi Fox models.
- (8) Manufacturer has recalled some models.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY  
ADMINISTRATION

Washington, D.C. 20590

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FIRST CLASS

# U. S. Department of Transportation news:



Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE TUESDAY  
April 18, 1978

**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

NHTSA 44-78 (Ames)  
Tel.No. (202)426-0670

DOT URGES RECALL OF  
FLOOR JACKS

The U.S. Department of Transportation today announced that it has strongly urged fourteen companies to conduct voluntary recalls of their hydraulic floor roller jacks because of a defect that could result in sudden failure causing serious injuries to mechanics or car owners during use.

Three of these companies already have agreed to voluntary recalls of over 100,000 jacks. Hollywood Accessories, Compton, Calif., has agreed to recall its Model 646 hydraulic floor roller jack. G.I. Joes, Inc., Portland, Ore., has recalled its Model J-204 and Model W-1629 jacks. Midland International Corp., Kansas City, Mo. has agreed to recall its Medallion Model 62-219.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal motor vehicle safety agency, opened a safety investigation into the failure of jacks of the Hollywood Model 646 design in July, 1977. The investigation was based on customer complaints alleging failure of the saddle leveling mechanism, and a report from a retail establishment indicating return of a number of these jacks by purchasers because of failures. Hollywood Accessories told the NHTSA that none of its Model 646 was shipped after being notified of NHTSA's investigation in July.

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The jack in question is an aftermarket item normally used by vehicle owners who do their own maintenance and by service stations and garages. It has an all-steel, wide body chassis, with steel front and rear casters and a single arm leveling mechanism on the right side. The jack is rated at one and one-half tons (3,000 pounds).

NHTSA is aware that models identical to, or substantially similar to, the Hollywood Model 646 are currently manufactured and/or marketed by several U.S. companies under a variety of trade names. It is the intent of NHTSA to proceed against these companies on the same basis as it has against Hollywood and G.I. Joes, Inc. to accomplish recalls of the identical or substantially similar jacks.

Companies presently marketing identical or substantially similar jacks include: Allison Corp., Model 9829; K=P Manufacturing Co., Model 2-2150; Chieftain Automotive Products, Model GL=08; Midland International Corp., Medallion Model 62=218; On=Guard Corp. of America, Model FS J387; Wilmar Corp., Model 1629; Universal Tool and Stamping Co., Inc., Model 6300; Foxcraft=Philmont Division, Gulf and Western Manufacturing Co., Foxcraft Model HFJ=30; Stem Distributing Co., Model A3000; Automotive Trading, Ltd., Model GE=3000; and Watervliet Tool Co., Model H-1. Later models of these manufacturers are not involved in this investigation.

Also under investigation are models marketed by Vornado, Zayre Corp., Schuman Auto Supply, Fred Meyer Co., and other manufacturers, importers, or direct buy retailers not yet named.

Many of the above companies were informed of the NHTSA investigation and urged to conduct voluntary recall campaigns.

The Hollywood Model 646 jack was tested at the NHTSA Engineering Test Facility in East Liberty, Ohio. During certain off-center load tests, the saddle leveling mechanism failed. Hollywood's Model 649 jack was also tested and did not fail, and this and later Hollywood models are not subject to this recall action.

Joan Claybrook, NHTSA Administrator said "so far we have received reports of six minor injuries allegedly due to failure of this type jack. Thus, we again urge owners to stop using it, especially if work under the vehicle is required. I strongly urge those manufacturers and importers who market jacks of the same type as Hollywood's Model 646 or G.I. Joes Models J=204 and W=1629 to take prompt action to voluntarily recall these jacks before any more are purchased by consumers, especially in light of the large number of sales anticipated for Father's Day."

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Under terms of its agreement with NHTSA, Hollywood Accessories will repair its Model 646 jacks at no cost to the owner. This jack is painted orange and has a circular saddle. All known jack owners and jack dealers known to have distributed the Model 646 will be notified by Hollywood of this recall program. Individual owners are asked to contact the Customer Service Department, Hollywood Accessories, 19914 S. Via Baron, Compton, Calif. 90220, or call (213) 774-8465.

G.I. Joes, Inc., has advised the agency that none of its Model J-204 or W-1629 jacks was sold to consumers. It has recalled these jacks from dealers and has scrapped them.

The Midland International Corp. has advised NHTSA that it is replacing the swiveling support crutch (saddle) on its Model 62-219, and all owners and dealers will be notified. Individual owners are asked to notify Midland International Corporation, Medallion Division, 1900 Johnson Drive at State Line Road, Shawnee Mission, Kan. 66205 or call (913) 384-4200.

Anyone who has experienced a failure of hydraulic floor roller jacks rated at one and one-half tons (3000 pounds) should report the problem by writing to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590, or by calling the agency's toll-free Auto Safety Hotline on 800-424-9393 (Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area 426-0123).

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# U. S. Department of Transportation news:



Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY  
April 20, 1978

NHTSA -- 48-78 (Paris)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

## AIR BRAKE STANDARD MEETING CANCELLED

The U. S. Department of Transportation today called off a planned April 24-25 public meeting on the no-lockup requirement for air brakes on trailers following a court decision holding the federal standard to be invalid.

On April 18, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled that the stopping distance requirements at 60 mph under the standard are invalid. The standard, FMVSS 121, was issued by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in 1971, and has been in effect since January 1975.

Joan Claybrook, administrator of the NHTSA, said the court ruling is being carefully evaluated, and no decision has been made on whether to appeal.

Meanwhile, she said, the hearing scheduled for April 24-25 at the Commerce Departmental Auditorium in Washington, D. C. is being called off in light of the court action.

The standard requires trucks, tractor-trailer rigs and buses with air brakes, traveling at 60 mph, to stop on a dry surface within 293 feet with no more than a momentary wheel lock up.

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# U. S. Department of Transportation news:



Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE MONDAY  
May 1, 1978

NHTSA -- 47-78 (Paris)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

## DOT PROPOSES NEW WAYS TO REDUCE AUTO THEFT

The U. S. Department of Transportation is proposing new ways to protect car owners against the most common methods used by thieves to steal motor vehicles.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) wants to amend its federal standard (No. 114) on theft protection to considerably upgrade the regulation and extend its coverage to multipurpose vehicles and light trucks.

The new rule would require:

- o The key that operates the ignition system to be different than the key which opens the vehicle's doors and trunk;
- o Door lock buttons to be modified to prevent lifting by external devices;
- o Door locking mechanisms inside the panel to be shielded to prevent tampering from outside devices;
- o The hood latch to be releasable from the passenger compartment;
- o The ignition wires to be protected to reduce hot wire starting of vehicles;
- o The ignition system to become inoperable if the ignition lock is removed;

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- o The steering column not to lock when the vehicle is in motion;
- o The ignition key alarm to continue whenever the engine is turned off, the ignition key is left in the ignition, and the door is opened.

These requirements would be effective beginning with 1981 model year passenger cars and 1982 model year trucks with a gross vehicle weight rating under 10,000 pounds, and multipurpose passenger vehicles.

The proposal to improve the standard is aimed primarily at the young thief, commonly known as a joyrider, who steals a vehicle for transportation or fun, or for stripping a few parts or items of equipment.

Law enforcement officials generally agree that five to 10 minutes is the maximum time a thief can safely devote, at least in most circumstances, to stealing a car.

"We believe the proposed upgrading of Standard No. 114 would substantially improve a vehicle's security by delaying entry into the vehicle and thereby discouraging the joyrider thief," said Joan Claybrook, the federal safety chief.

"The joyrider thief is involved in at least a third of the actual number of vehicles stolen, but accounts for a very large majority of stolen vehicles that are later involved in accidents," Claybrook said.

She cited data from a recent study done for the NHTSA which reflect the seriousness of the problem and which concludes that:

(1) Stolen cars are involved in one out of every 350 accidents and account for approximately 5,000 disabling injuries and 130 fatalities annually.

(2) Stolen cars are from 47 to 200 times more likely than unstolen cars to be involved in accidents.

(3) Approximately one million vehicles were stolen in 1976, and a conservative estimate of those stolen for joyriding purposes is 350,000.

(4) Vehicle theft costs society from \$1.8 billion to \$2.9 billion annually, and represents 8.4 percent of all the crimes committed in this country.

NHTSA estimates the cost of security improvements under the improved standard would be about \$1-\$2 a vehicle for passenger cars and about \$3-\$5 a vehicle for light trucks and multipurpose passenger vehicles.

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the proposal by July 31, 1978 by writing to the Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D. C. 20590.

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

# news:



Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE TUESDAY  
May 2, 1978

NHTSA == 46-78  
Tel. 202-426-9550

MONTHLY

COMPLIANCE REPORT

FOR DECEMBER 1977

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. 20590.

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, 40 CFR (Public Availability of Information). Basically, the fee is established at 25¢ for the first page and 5¢ for each additional page.

# U. S. Department of Transportation

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Washington, D.C. 20590



**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY  
May 4, 1978

NHTSA 50-78 (Ames)  
Tel.No. (202) 426-0670

## CHRYSLER RECALLS VOLARES AND ASPENS TO CORRECT SUSPENSION PROBLEM

The Chrysler Corp. will recall more than one million of its 1976, 1977 and 1978 Plymouth Volare and Dodge Aspen vehicles to correct a problem in the front suspension system that could result in loss of vehicle control, the U.S. Department of Transportation said today.

Chrysler notified the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal motor vehicle safety agency, that the recall involves 1,100,000 vehicles manufactured from December 1975 through October 1977.

The manufacturer said that on some of these vehicles, the pivot bar support plates, which are part of the front suspension system, could experience fatigue failure when exposed to heavy stresses. The company said the problem was due to a part provided by one of its suppliers.

Owners of the affected vehicles will be notified by the manufacturer as soon as an adequate supply of parts for the recall correction is available.

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116

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

# news:

Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590



FOR RELEASE 8:00 P.M. EDT WEDNESDAY  
May 3, 1978 ~ ~ ~

DOT-61-78

Contact: Howard Coan  
Phone: (202) 426-4321

U.S. FAVORS LOWER INTERNATIONAL  
AIR FARES, DOT OFFICIAL SAYS

The United States favors lower fares and fewer restrictions in international air travel, and is promoting competition rather than protectionism, Deputy Secretary of Transportation Alan Butchman said today.

"We continue to believe that protectionism is self-defeating -- that benefits flow from promoting, not shutting off, new avenues to lower cost air transportation -- that competition promotes ... performance and profits," he said.

Butchman made his remarks in a speech prepared for delivery in Boston at a meeting of the International Air Transportation Conference sponsored by the Society of Automotive Engineers Aerospace Council.

Butchman added that the United States does not seek this expanded, low-fare international air service based on competition at the expense of another nation or its airlines. "We believe in reciprocity. Our strategy, however, is to trade competitive opportunities rather than restrictions, and to make concessions only in return for progress toward competitive objectives and a fair marketplace," he said.

In its international air negotiations, the United States will continue to oppose airline capacity arrangements and work to minimize rate and fare regulations, the DOT official said.

Each country's airlines should compete for business, Butchman stated, with passenger ticket purchases, not an arbitrary agreement, determining market share.

Butchman noted that U.S. air carriers do not dominate the international market. Last year, U.S. international airlines carried 19.5 million passengers, less than 4 percent of the world's 514 million scheduled airline passengers, he said.

The Deputy Secretary also said international competition between scheduled and charter airlines "is healthy, and that if it is allowed to take place it will result in more efficient and lower cost air transportation. Fares and **rates will** find their own levels, based on competition in the marketplace, and these levels will allow efficient and well-managed airlines to be profitable and economically healthy."

Butchman pointed out three benefits of competition in international air travel:

First, government subsidies for airlines are expensive and "no government wants to pour endless capital into an enterprise which, properly managed and developed, could be self-supporting." The projected financial needs of the world's airlines through 1987 may reach \$70 billion, he said.

Second, a nation's interest in its airline is served better by a market expansion and growth policy than by a protectionism policy.

Third, by offering more public services, the international air transport industry can increase traffic, generating new markets and producing more revenue for their airlines and such related industries as tourism.

Butchman added the Administration also would continue to seek regulatory reform of the domestic aviation industry to allow increased competition. Last month the Senate passed a Carter Administration-backed aviation reform bill by an overwhelming margin, 83-9, he said.

But, the version currently in a House subcommittee is "a reform bill in name only," Butchman noted. He said while the bill makes almost no provision for phasing out regulatory controls to allow increased competition, it would decommission the Civil Aeronautics Board in five years, "which would leave the airlines suddenly and totally unregulated."

Butchman added, "I don't think there is any way Congress is going to let that happen. In fact, I don't think the reform movement can be denied."

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

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Office of Public Affairs  
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FOR RELEASE THURSDAY  
May 4, 1978

- NHTSA -- 52-78 (Paris)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

## DOT FINDS CHEVETTE FAILS TO MEET FUEL SYSTEM STANDARD

The U. S. Department of Transportation said today it has made an initial determination that the 1977 Chevrolet Chevette failed to comply with the government's federal safety standard on fuel system integrity.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), said five tests it conducted on the 1977 Chevette for compliance with Standard No. 301 produced evidence that in a 30 mile-per-hour rear end impact, the vehicle's fuel system is not secure from rupture and leakage.

In the tests involving rear barrier collisions, the NHTSA said part of the vehicle's rear suspension system (panhard rod) impacted and ruptured the Chevette's fuel tank, spilling fuel in excess of the amount permitted under the standard.

General Motors has made design changes in its 1978 Chevettes to correct the deficiency in the fuel system integrity. The NHTSA has crash tested a 1978 model and has found it complied with Standard 301.

The manufacturer has been notified of the initial finding of non-compliance in the 1977 model and will be given an opportunity to present its views at a public meeting scheduled for 10 a.m. on June 6, 1978.

The meeting will be held in Room 5332 of the Department of Transportation headquarters building, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D. C. Interested persons are also invited to the public meeting.

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**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY  
May 5, 1978

NHTSA 51-78 (Ames)  
Tel.No. (202) 426-0670

VOLVO RECALLS 1975 MODELS  
FOR ACCELERATOR PROBLEM

Volvo of America Corp. has recalled 45,000 of its 1975, model 240 series vehicles for correction of a defect that may result in a sticking accelerator pedal or a sudden increase in engine speed, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced today.

Since this defect can result in loss of ability to control vehicle speed and a vehicle crash, the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), advises all Volvo owners who have received recall notices that they should have their vehicles corrected immediately.

The federal motor vehicle safety agency, which directly influenced this recall, said the vehicles to be recalled will be corrected by replacement of those throttle cables made of a material which has experienced a short life span, and by installation of a limiting bracket, if it is missing or a throttle cable is replaced.

The company will also voluntarily install an improved throttle valve return spring on all of these vehicles.

The company notified the government that affected Volvo owners were to be notified of this recall in March.

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# U. S. Department of Transportation news:

Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20590



FOR RELEASE MONDAY  
May 8, 1978

NHTSA--55-78 (Boaz)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

## DOT FINDS DEFECT IN PINTO FUEL TANKS

The U.S. Department of Transportation announced today that it has made an initial determination that a safety defect exists in the fuel systems of some 1.9 million Ford Pinto and 30,000 Mercury Bobcat automobiles built during the 1971-1976 model years (except station wagons).

An investigation conducted by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), on the crash performance of the Pinto's fuel tank and filler pipe has been completed. The findings of this investigation demonstrate that low to moderate speed rear-end collisions of Pintos produce massive fuel leaks due to puncture or tearing of the fuel tank and separation of the filler pipe from the tank.

The federal safety agency noted that a crash test program involving 12 rear-end collisions of Pintos produced two fires from fuel spillage when hit by full sized vehicles travelling at 35 miles per hour. Other tests at 30 and 35 miles per hour consistently resulted in fuel tank damage sufficient to produce leaks, and separation of the filler pipe from the tank. In many of these crashes, the Pinto doors were also jammed shut.

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The NHTSA said its engineering findings are supported by the fact that the history of lawsuits against the Ford Motor Co. shows that rear-end collisions of Pintos have, in fact, resulted in fatalities and burn injuries. Ford has been notified of the initial determination and will be given an opportunity to present its views at a public meeting on June 14, 1978.

Although the investigation was centered on the Pinto, information was received from Ford which stated that Mercury Bobcats "utilize essentially the same structures as Pintos of contemporary manufacture, and their fuel systems and related components are identical to those employed in such Pintos." The safety agency thus concluded that the crash performance of Bobcat fuel tanks and filler pipes would be comparable to that of the Pinto.

The NHTSA also stated that its Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 301 concerning fuel system integrity became effective September 1976, to establish minimum performance levels in rear-end collisions. The fuel system of the 1977 and later model Pintos and Bobcats was redesigned, and a 1977 Pinto was tested and met the requirements of Standard 301.

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

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**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY  
May 10, 1978

NHTSA 53-78 (Chor)  
Tel.No. (202) 426-0670

DOT ANNOUNCES FOUR NEW  
AUTO SAFETY INVESTIGATIONS

Four new auto safety investigations were announced today by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The investigations, being conducted by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), include a suspected front wheel bearing problem in 1975 Monza, Starfire and Skyhawk cars, a front brake problem in Dodge heavy-duty vans, failures of trailer wheels made by Broad Wheels Co. of Oneonta, Ala., and a brake problem in Ford heavy trucks.

The first investigation includes 1975 Chevrolet Monzas with V-8 engines, Oldsmobile Starfires and Buick Skyhawks. The case centers on front wheel-bearing failures which may damage or break the wheel spindles. NHTSA said if the spindle breaks, the wheel can separate from the vehicle.

There are approximately 131,000 of these cars and the agency reports 21 complaints from owners, including three reports of accidents. Owner complaints also mentioned premature front tire wear, front brake problems and loud grinding or squealing noises from the front wheels.

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In the second case, NHTSA is investigating a front brake problem in 1973-1977 Dodge van models B-300, MB-300, CB-300, MB-400 and CB-400. The agency describes the problem as deterioration of the steering mechanism stops which permits the front wheels to turn too far, thus impairing brake performance. Owner complaints report temporary loss of front braking.

The agency estimates there are 300,000 of these vans. It has reports of 40 failures, including nine accidents.

The third investigation involves the failure of chrome plated trailer wheels. The agency described the problem as separation of the spider from the rim causing the wheel to separate from the trailer. NHTSA cited more than 100 reports of broken or cracked wheels, many from boat trailer manufacturers whose customers reported wheel failures.

The fourth case involves brake failures on 1975-1978 Ford heavy truck models B, C, F, L, W, and CL equipped with antilock brake systems. The NHTSA is studying a suspected problem in the wiring harness connecting the rear-wheel sensor junction block to the antilock computer module. A failure in the harness may result in reduced braking capacity. The agency estimates there are 85,000 Ford heavy trucks with the antilock equipment.

Anyone who has experienced any of these problems is urged to contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration by writing to NHTSA, 400 Seventh St., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590 or by calling the agency's toll-free Auto Safety Hotline on 800-424-9393 (Washington, D.C. metro area 426-0123).

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY  
May 10, 1978

**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

NHTSA 49-78 (Ames)  
Tel.No. (202)426-0670

CHECK FAN BELTS AND HOSES  
DOT ADVISES MOTORISTS

With the approach of hot weather, the U.S. Department of Transportation advises motorists to have the fan belts and hoses in their vehicles checked, and replaced if necessary.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal motor vehicle safety agency, said that overheating is one of the most common causes of vehicle breakdown during the hot summer months. Such breakdowns, in addition to causing inconvenience and lost time, can also result in serious engine damage because of the failure of a relatively inexpensive hose or fan belt.

The federal safety agency also said such failures could be more prevalent now since many motorists buy their gasoline at "gas-and-go" stations where a motorist is no longer provided with such services as checking the radiator and visual observation of belt and hose condition.

Motorists are advised to check their belts and hoses, or have them checked by a service station, and to replace those which are suspect. These checks are particularly important before embarking on a long trip. Here's what to look for:

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o Hoses:

Check for swelling or bulging of hoses; cracks, especially near the ends of hoses where the hose clamps are fastened; and extreme softness of hoses. Make visual checks with the engine running, and be careful of moving engine parts. Before feeling the hoses with your hands, turn the engine off.

Also check for squeaks or grinding noises coming from the water pump which may signal impending failure.

While the engine is running, also visually check for leaks from hoses and the radiator, but stay away from moving engine parts. If you periodically have to add coolant to your radiator, you may have a leak in the radiator or a hose, or the pressure cap is malfunctioning.

Also remember, if your vehicle seems to run hotter than normal, you may have some cooling system problem caused by a faulty thermostat or blockage or contamination of your cooling system by rust or sludge. Have your serviceman correct such problems before you get stranded along the roadway.

o Belts (Fan, Alternator, Power Steering):

Check for cracks, peeling, splitting, or glazing. With the engine off, momentarily turn belts so that you can visually examine the underside. Also check belts for proper tension.

A fan belt that has glazed may slip, causing overheating of the engine. A glazed, slipping alternator belt can result in a lack of a proper battery charge which could lead to an expensive battery replacement when the real cause is a defective belt. Failure of the power steering belt will result in loss of power steering.

If your belts and hoses are several years old, consider replacing them. They could fail suddenly. Also, keep a roll of duct tape in your car; it can often be used to temporarily stop a leak in a hose until you can get to a service station.

When you replace a belt, if it still has a little useful life, keep it in the trunk, along with a set of wrenches. Then you have a spare, in case of breakdown, with which you could "limp in" to a service station.

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

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**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

FOR RELEASE MONDAY

May 15, 1978

NHTSA 56-78 (Cook)

Tel: 202-426-9550

## IMPROVED PROTECTION PROPOSED FOR CHILDREN IN CARS

The U.S. Department of Transportation today issued a new proposal designed to improve protection for infants and small children in automobiles.

The safety standard that presently covers only child seats will be amended to include car beds, infant carriers, and child harnesses, under the new proposal written by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

In addition, testing procedures for these units would be upgraded to require dynamic (in-motion) crash tests with special dummies, simulating a 3-year-old child and 6-month-old infant, instead of the presently prescribed static tests. The child restraint proposal would become effective May 1, 1980, and the proposal on child dummies on the date of publication of the final rule in the Federal Register.

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

"What happens to small children who are unrestrained in a crash is that they literally become flying missiles. Parents must understand this. All we can do is to issue a standard which will make sure these devices are properly constructed, but the important thing is that they be used."

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All child restraints would be subject to frontal impacts at speeds simulating 30-mile-per-hour crashes, and would be required to retain the test dummy in the system without any loss of structural integrity, NHTSA said.

The seating systems would have to be attachable to the vehicle by means of the vehicle's seat belts. A special "tether belt" supplied by the manufacturer would be permitted in addition to the lap belt as a means of attachment. For restraint systems equipped with these "tether" belts, an additional frontal test at 20 miles-per-hour would be required without the tether attached. NHTSA said this additional test is intended to assure a minimum level of safety performance when the tether strap is not used, since statistics indicate this happens about 50 percent of the time. The amount of force necessary to open belt buckles and release the child from the restraint would be specified.

Infant car beds when used would have to be installed laterally across the vehicle seat, using the available seat belt or one supplied by the manufacturer.

Manufacturers of the restraint systems would be required to label them with the weight and height of children who may safely use the system, and with brief instructions on how to install and adjust the systems. An instruction manual would also be required, explaining fully the installation of the device in the vehicle, and the proper placement of the child in the unit. The labels and manuals are intended to reduce the widespread misuse of child restraints.

NHTSA has invited all qualified individuals, organizations and other parties interested in participating in the child seating proposal, but financially unable to do so, to apply for financial assistance. This may be done by submitting an application to Ms. Jeannette Feldman, Public Affairs and Consumer Participation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5232, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590 (202-426-0670). Applications are due June 14, 1978.

The closing date for comments on both the child restraint and child and infant-dummy proposals is Dec. 1, 1978. Interested parties are invited to submit their comments to: Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590.

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

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Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE MONDAY  
May 22, 1978

NHTSA -- 54-78  
Tel. 202-426-9550

NHTSA ISSUES  
COMPLIANCE REPORT  
FOR JAN. 1978

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. 20590.

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, 40 CFR (Public Availability of Information). Basically, the fee is established at 25¢ for the first page and 5¢ for each additional page.

# U. S. Department of Transportation

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FOR RELEASE MONDAY  
May 22, 1978

**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

NHTSA 57-78 (Ames)  
Tel.No. (202)426-0670

## EFFECTS OF LOAD LEVELING HITCHES ON CAR-TRAILER HANDLING AND BRAKING

The U.S. Department of Transportation today announced the publication of a report describing the effects of load leveling hitches on car-trailer handling and braking.

The report was prepared by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the federal motor vehicle safety agency, which completed a research program concerned with the proper use of load leveling hitches with recreational trailers.

Load leveling or load equalizing hitches are trailer hitches designed for attachment to a vehicle to permit towing larger and heavier trailers that cannot be handled by simpler hitches. If properly adjusted, these load leveling hitches can avoid dangerous overloading of the rear tires, axles, and suspension system of the towing vehicle.

Results of the research program indicate that the amount of load leveling applied to the hitch has a significant effect on car-trailer stability and braking performance. Although load leveling can improve headlight aiming and prevent overloading of rear tires, too much load leveling can induce trailer jack-knifing and, with certain vehicles, can reduce braking capability. In general, pulling a trailer makes handling of the towing vehicle more difficult; but the proper use of load leveling minimizes this effect.

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Existing guidelines which call for the application of load leveling until the car-trailer combination is level may, in many cases, transfer more load to the front axle of the towing vehicle than is desirable for proper vehicle handling, stability, and braking. In such cases, it may be more desirable to apply less load leveling and maintain a level condition by using shock absorbers incorporating a feature allowing the rear of the towing vehicle to be raised by air pressure (commonly referred to as "air shocks") on the rear axle of the towing vehicle.

The NHTSA report describes methods of applying known amounts of load leveling and determining proper vehicle attitude. These procedures, used in conjunction with vehicle data supplied by the manufacturer of the towing vehicle, can relate load leveling to vehicle attitude.

The report is available from the National Technical Information Service, 5285 Port Royal, Springfield, Va. 22151 for \$6.00. When ordering, request publication number PB-278-297.

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

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FOR RELEASE TUESDAY  
May 23, 1978

**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

NHTSA 58-78 (Ames)  
Tel.No. (202)426-0670

CONSUMER ADVISORY ISSUED  
ON AUTO BATTERY HAZARDS

Every day, and at any time of the year, many American motorists experiencing battery problems are checking their batteries and jump-starting their vehicles. These procedures can be dangerous, if not done properly. Any contact, or even near contact, with a car battery can result in serious injury unless proper precautions are taken.

These precautions are outlined in a Consumer Protection Bulletin issued today by the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), which says that too many people are careless when working with or near vehicle batteries.

The warning follows a news report of a young man who was seriously injured while trying to check the fluid level in a battery. He used a match for visibility. The flame ignited hydrogen gas produced by the battery, touching off an explosion.

The federal safety agency said that millions of motorists check their batteries periodically and millions more have to jump-start their vehicles, using power from another battery. These procedures occur thousands of times a day, usually without mishap. But battery-associated explosions can occur and when they do, the prime hazards are particles or battery acid flying into the eyes of the victim and acid splashing on the skin.

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The best way to avoid battery problems is to:

- .....Have your vehicle tuned periodically. A properly tuned vehicle will require less of a drain on a battery when starting, and will reduce the likelihood of running down the battery through repeated attempts to start the vehicle.
- .....Have your battery checked periodically by a service establishment, and recharge or replace the battery, as necessary, to minimize requirements for having to jump-start your vehicle.
- .....Unless you know exactly what you're doing, don't try to check the battery yourself. Leave such checking to someone who knows how.

If you must work with your battery, the NHTSA recommends the following practices:

- .....If you must jump-start your car using jumper cables, follow the jump-starting procedures in your owner's manual. Carefully observe all precautions.
- .....If you don't have an owner's manual, get help from someone thoroughly knowledgeable in proper jump-starting procedures.
- .....Remove rings and metal watchbands, bracelets, etc., before jump-starting to avoid problems caused by careless electrical contact such as sparks.
- .....Wear eye shields when working with or near batteries.
- .....Keep sparks and flames away from batteries.
- .....Before jump-starting your vehicle by using power from the battery of another vehicle, make sure both batteries are of the same voltage and the vehicle electrical systems are compatible.
- .....Make sure you know which battery terminals are positive and which are negative. Follow the instructions in your owner's manual on making jumper cable connections.
- .....Don't let your head get too close to the battery when connecting jumper cables.
- .....Use extreme care when connecting or removing jumper cables. Grasp cables by the insulated handles -- never by the metal ends.
- .....Be careful of moving engine parts such as the rotating fan.

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.....After touching a battery or battery cap, do not touch or rub your eyes until you have thoroughly washed your hands.

.....If battery acid comes in contact with the skin or eyes, flush immediately with large quantities of cool water. If acid gets into the eyes, seek medical help immediately.

The NHTSA has also published a fact sheet entitled "Battery Hazards." The general public can obtain single copies of this publication, without charge, by writing to the General Services Division/Distribution, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590.

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Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, June 2, 1978

**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

NHTSA 61=78 (Paris)  
Tel.No. (202) 426=0670

DOT RESCHEDULES  
CHEVETTE MEETING

The U.S. Department of Transportation has rescheduled for June 16 a public meeting on the government's initial determination that the 1977 Chevrolet Chevette failed to comply with a federal safety standard on fuel system integrity.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced early in May that five tests it conducted on the 1977 Chevette for compliance with Standard No.301 produced evidence that in a 30-mile-per-hour rear end impact, the vehicle's fuel system is not secure from rupture and leakage.

The public meeting, set originally for June 6, will be held instead on June 16 at 10 a.m. in Room 6332 of the Transportation headquarters building, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C.

The federal safety agency agreed to a 10-day delay in the hearing to allow General Motors additional time to make a complete presentation at the meeting.

Interested persons are invited to participate at the meeting through written or oral presentations.

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Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590

June 8, 1978

NHTSA -- 60-78  
Tel. 202-426-9550

NHTSA ISSUES  
COMPLIANCE REPORT  
FOR FEB. 1978

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. 20590.

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, 40 CFR (Public Availability of Information). Basically, the fee is established at 25¢ for the first page and 5¢ for each additional page.

# U. S. Department of Transportation

# news:



Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY  
June 9, 1978

NHTSA -- 64-78 (BOAZ)  
Tel. 202-426-9550

**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

## DOT ANNOUNCES RECALL OF PINTOS AND BOBCATS

The U.S. Department of Transportation announced today that Ford Motor Co. has agreed to recall some 1.5 million Pinto and 30,000 Mercury Bobcat passenger cars to correct two aspects of their fuel system design, which can cause fires in the event of a rear-end collision.

The cars involved in the recall are all 1971-1976 Pintos and 1975-76 Bobcats, except station wagons.

An investigation conducted by the Department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) revealed that low to moderate speed rear-end collisions of the Pintos produce massive fuel leaks due to puncture or tearing of the fuel tank and separation of the filler pipe from the tank. Although the investigation was centered on the Pinto, information was provided by Ford that Mercury Bobcats utilize essentially the same structures as Pintos of contemporary manufacture, and their fuel systems and related components are identical to those employed in such Pintos. The safety agency thus concluded that the crash performance of Bobcat fuel tanks and filler pipes would be comparable to that of the Pinto.

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On May 8, NHTSA informed Ford of its initial determination that the vehicles contain a safety related defect. A public hearing was scheduled for June 14 to provide the company an opportunity to present data, views and arguments with respect to the agency's findings. In a letter dated June 6, Ford requested clarification of the agency's findings.

The clarification was provided on June 8. NHTSA reported that it had found that two aspects of the Pinto/Bobcat design had precipitated that May 8 determination. Those were (1) fuel filler pipe length that may contribute to disconnection from the fuel tank, and (2) exposure of the front of the fuel tank to rear underbody components that may contribute to punctures or tears in the tank body as a consequence of a rear-end collision.

Upon confirmation of the agency's findings, Ford agreed to recall all the cars and to remedy the condition free of charge to owners.

Owners of the affected vehicles will be notified by the manufacturer and advised when to bring their vehicles in for repair. In view of the company's decision to recall the cars, the public hearing scheduled for June 14 has been cancelled.

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

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Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE SUNDAY AMs

June 11, 1978

NHTSA 62-78 (Cook)

Tel: 202-426-9550

"BIG RIG" TRUCK OPERATORS  
CHALLENGED TO FUEL-SAVING TEST  
OF 55 MPH ON OHIO SPEED TRACK

The U.S. Department of Transportation has challenged independent "big rig" operators to a fuel economy duel to prove the value of driving tractor-trailer combinations within the nationwide 55 mph speed limit.

Billed as the "Double Nickel Challenge," the three-day event is scheduled for August 1-3 around the 7 1/2 mile high speed track at the Transportation Research Center in East Liberty, Ohio.

It is being managed as a joint effort of the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Voluntary Truck and Bus Fuel Economy Improvement Program. Members of the government-industry program seek to reduce fuel consumption by the nation's commercial vehicles through cooperative efforts between equipment manufacturers and operators.

"This public demonstration is for the direct benefit of the owner-operator segment of the trucking industry which has been outspoken against the national 55 mph speed limit and which questions government test data and engineering calculations that conclusively prove truckers can save fuel and money by complying with this law," said Joan Claybrook, administrator of the federal safety agency. "I'm confident that this public demonstration will convince these particular truckers of the economic importance of observing the national speed limit."

Thirty-three owner-operators will be chosen within the next three months to represent their segment of the trucking industry in the "Double Nickel Challenge" ("Double Nickel" is CB jargon for 55 mph). They will reflect a broad section of four or five axle tractor-trailer combinations with a variety of power, drive train, and axle ratio combinations. Each driver will make two separate 50 mile runs around the oval track, NHTSA said.

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The first test run can be made at any speed above 55 mph that the owner=driver chooses.

The second run will be made at a steady 55 mph. Auxiliary fuel tanks, which will be removed and weighed before and after each run, will provide a precise measurement of the actual fuel consumed on each run.

The actual amount of fuel consumed by each vehicle will be posted for public view immediately following each test run, the federal safety agency said. Owner=operator and fleet trade press representatives will be invited to observe and report the test findings.

Owner=operators wishing to participate in the event should write to the following address:

Double Nickel Challenge  
Suite 305  
1001 N.W. 62nd Street  
Fort Lauderdale, Fla. 33309

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

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Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590

**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

FOR RELEASE MONDAY  
June 12, 1978

NHTSA 63-78 (Ames)  
Tel.No. (202) 426-0670

## DOT ANNOUNCES THREE NEW INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING FORD AND FIAT AUTOMOBILES

Three new auto safety investigations involving Ford Motor Co. and Fiat vehicles were announced today by the U.S. Department of Transportation. The investigations are being conducted by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Two of the investigations concern an alleged fuel leakage problem in the fuel line of 1975 and 1976 Ford Granadas and Mercury Monarchs equipped with V8 engines, which can result in engine compartment fires, and a suspected steering mechanism problem in 1973-1975 Ford Pinto and Mustang II vehicles and Mercury Bobcats, which can result in a loss of steering. The third investigation involves front wheel bearing failures on 1973-1977 Fiat 128 and X-1/9 vehicles which can result in loss of vehicle control.

The Granada/Monarch investigation was initiated on the basis of eight complaints of fires sent to NHTSA plus two complaints of fires provided by the Center for Auto Safety. Information from the manufacturer indicates at least 75 complaints of fires on the V8 model. Two injuries allegedly have been caused by this problem.

Involved are approximately 568,000 vehicles. Fuel leakage can occur at the point where a small rubber hose connects the metal fuel line to the fuel filter which is attached to the carburetor. Drivers are encouraged to check this small rubber connecting hose and its clamps for signs of fuel leakage and to have repairs made promptly if cracks on the hose, looseness, or signs of leakage are discovered.

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The steering case involves 1973=1975 Pinto, Mustang II, and Bobcat vehicles without power steering. The investigation was triggered by a petition from Martin C. Erwin of Bloomington, IN. who noticed a slippage in the steering of his 1975 Mustang II and two days later the steering wheel spun freely. The problem involves the steering coupling flange which is part of the steering mechanism.

Apparently a pinch bolt used on this flange can loosen, resulting in a number of problems which can permit the steering wheel to rotate freely without turning the wheels on the vehicle.

This investigation involves approximately 1,266,000 vehicles. The NHTSA has received eight owner complaints concerning the problem, and data provided by the manufacturer indicates 54 other complaints. These reports include nine accidents involving two injuries. Drivers who notice a sudden abnormality in their steering, such as slippage when the steering wheel is turned, should have repairs made immediately. In January 1978, Ford initiated a recall of 66,000, 1974 Pinto and Mustang II vehicles (built Aug. thru Oct., 1973) for this same problem.

The failure of front wheel bearings on 1973=1977 Fiat 128 and X-1/9 vehicles can result in loss of vehicle control due to wheel looseness, lockup, or separation.

Twelve complaints of such failures have been received by the agency and information obtained from the manufacturer indicates over 900 complaints. These include 7 reports of loss of control, 2 reports of wheel looseness, 2 complaints of wheel lockup, and 2 reports of wheel separation. To date, no injuries or deaths have been reported.

Fiat also reported 11,000 warranty claims regarding front wheel bearing failure. In addition, data available on sales of replacement bearings indicate a failure rate of almost 31 percent.

An estimated 221,000 vehicles are involved in this investigation. In some cases, drivers may be alerted to the existence of the problem when it first begins by a grinding sound coming from the front wheels. However, this audible warning may not be heard over the noise of a radio or air conditioner/heater operation.

Anyone who has experienced any of these problems is urged to contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration by writing to NHTSA, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590 or by calling the agency's toll-free Auto Safety Hotline on 800-424-9393 (Washington, D.C. metro area call 426-0123.)

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# U.S. Department of Transportation

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Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590

EMBARGOED UNTIL SUNDAY AM

June 18, 1978

NHTSA 59-78 (Paris)

Tel. No. (202) 426-9550

## THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF AUTOMOBILE REGULATIONS

Federal safety standards and fuel economy regulations do not impose an undue burden on the automotive industry, according to a preliminary report released today by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The preliminary findings, prepared by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), are contained in a study entitled "The Burden of Automobile Regulation: Fact or Myth?"

The report addresses charges by auto industry executives and others that the industry is being over-regulated and harmed economically by federal regulation. Critics of the regulatory agency claim, among other things, that federal regulations impede growth, stifle innovation, and hamper the industry's ability to compete internationally.

The study, which examines such fundamental issues as the need for regulation, the costs imposed on the industry, and the overall effect of NHTSA's rulemaking on the industry and the economy, draws these major conclusions:

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o The NHTSA's responsibility to improve safety is warranted by the annual loss of 47,000 lives and the millions of injuries in motor vehicle crashes. The annual economic loss to society because of these accidents is estimated at \$43 billion.

o The federal safety agency does not agree with charges that it adversely affects competition. Instead, it promotes competition by requiring compliance with uniform performance standards, and by issuing fuel economy standards which could make domestic manufacturers more competitive with smaller, more fuel efficient foreign cars.

o The consumer has benefited from both the improved safety of motor vehicles and their improved fuel economy.

o The increasing number of vehicle recalls because of safety defects indicates a continuing need for federal intervention in motor vehicle safety.

"This report represents a preliminary staff study which attempts to assess the effect of our federal standards on the automotive industry," said Joan Claybrook, the administrator of the NHTSA. "We are seeking comments on this report from consumer groups, from other government agencies, from the industry itself and from the general public."

"The agency feels it has an important social and economic role to provide a challenge to the engineering expertise in the industry to produce a safer, cleaner and more economical car."

The report summarizes NHTSA's estimates of the cost of federal standards now in effect, as well as those major standards expected to take effect in the next six years. The estimated average price to consumers of all mandated safety features for a 1978 automobile is only about \$250 -- approximately one-half the amount claimed by some automakers -- or only about five percent of the total vehicle price. The costs of major future safety, consumer and fuel economy rules are estimated at \$285 for passenger cars and \$60 for light trucks and vans. These costs could go higher in the mid-1980s because of inflationary factors. Consumers, however, should realize a net vehicle lifetime savings of more than \$600 for a model year 1984 vehicle compared to a model year 1978 car.

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Other findings indicate:

o Profitability and sales of the industry are largely a function of the state of the economy, with no discernible effects stemming from regulation.

o Improved fuel economy, a result of government regulation, will facilitate petroleum conservation and reduce the nation's dependence on imported oil. The domestic auto industry will benefit from the improved fuel efficiency of their vehicles, as their ability to compete with fuel efficient imported cars simultaneously improves.

Single copies of the report are available, free of charge, by writing to the Office of Plans and Programs, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590.

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

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Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY

June 29, 1978



NHTSA -- 66-78 (Paris)

Tel. 202-426-9550

## MOTORCYCLE DEATHS RISE AFTER REPEAL OF HELMET USE LAWS

Deaths involving motorcycle accidents have reached record numbers following the repeal of helmet use laws in 22 states, the U. S. Department of Transportation reports.

Figures released by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that 4,082 motorcyclists were killed in traffic accidents in 1977. This represents an increase of 770 over the number of cyclists killed in 1976 -- a startling 23 percent increase for the period.

"A major factor in the higher motorcycle death toll, said Joan Claybrook, head of the NHTSA, "was the repeal of helmet use laws in eight states in 1976 and an additional 14 states in 1977. We are now beginning to see the dire consequences of these repeal actions.

"Opposition to state helmet use laws comes in the face of overwhelming evidence that motorcycle helmets save lives by reducing the severity of head injuries. The value of helmets has been documented for more than 30 years, not only in this country, but in other nations around the world."

The latest data were compiled by the NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis and update a special report on motorcycle fatalities issued last January by the Center.

The federal safety agency said a number of other factors may have contributed to the 23 percent climb in motorcycle deaths, including an increase in miles traveled and a boost in the number of motorcycles. However, cycle registrations rose only 1 percent (the vehicle population now totals slightly over 5 million) and sales increased less than 3 percent from 1976 to 1977.

The states which have repealed their helmet laws include Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Rhode Island in 1976, and Colorado, Hawaii, Indiana, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah and Washington in 1977. Delaware, Idaho, Ohio and Wisconsin also repealed their laws in 1978.

The NHTSA said four special accident studies are nearing completion in four of these states -- Colorado, Oklahoma, Kansas and South Dakota. Preliminary findings in these studies reconfirm the protective value of helmets. They indicate that the chance of fatal head injury appears to be at least four times greater for the unhelmeted motorcyclist. Head injuries were the most frequent single cause of death for both helmeted and unhelmeted riders, but the incidence of head injury was much lower for the helmeted riders.

Other findings from the Colorado study show:

- o A decline in helmet usage from nearly 100 percent to less than 60 percent.
- o A 260 percent increase in the proportion of accidents with severe head injuries.
- o An increase in rider fatalities from 14 per 1,000 riders in reported accidents to 22 per 1,000 riders.

Additional data on fatalities and registration compiled by the NHTSA and Federal Highway Administration show that in Colorado there was an increase from 3.4 in 1976 to 6.3 in 1977 in the rate of motorcycle fatalities per 10,000 registered vehicles.

Preliminary results of a University of Southern California study of 970 motorcycle accidents show that the chance of serious or fatal head injuries is five times greater for unhelmeted motorcyclists in the Los Angeles area.

Not one single case in the Los Angeles study was found where the helmet caused an accident by impairing hearing or vision (as is sometimes claimed by opponents of use laws), nor were helmets responsible for causing any type of injury other than in severe impacts where some minor skin burns resulted from the chin strap.

For more information on these studies and a Fact Sheet entitled: "Motorcycle Helmets -- They Save Lives and Reduce Injuries," write to the National Center for Statistics and Analysis, NHTSA, 2100 Second Street, SW, NRD-34, Washington, D. C. 20590.

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# U. S. Department of Transportation

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**CONSUMER ADVISORY**

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY  
June 30, 1978

NHTSA 67-78 (Ames)  
Tel.No. (202)426-0670

## EATON ANTI-LOCK BRAKE CONTROLLERS BEING RECALLED

The U.S. Department of Transportation today announced the recall of approximately 45,000 Eaton Model 21 brake anti-lock controllers because of a problem that could result in a "no-brake" condition on the axle or axles controlled by the controller.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) said the suspect controllers were sold to various vehicle manufacturers and were used on heavy trucks of the following makes: GMC, Peterbilt, Mack, Kenworth, and Freightliner.

Eaton Corp., manufacturer of the anti-lock system, said the percentage of potentially defective controllers is currently estimated to be less than one percent.

This recall was influenced by a NHTSA inquiry to Mack Trucks, Inc., asking the truck manufacturer to provide detailed information after the federal safety agency became aware of a brake anti-lock problem on vehicles manufactured by Mack. An investigation conducted by the truck manufacturer, in conjunction with Eaton, revealed problems in some controller components manufactured for Eaton by the Magnavox Co.

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Each manufacturer supplied with suspect controllers during the period from Nov. 1974 through March, 1976 has been notified of the problem, and owners of vehicles with suspect controllers will receive recall notification from the manufacturers of their particular trucks.

Joan Claybrook, NHTSA administrator, urges all truck owners to cooperate with truck manufacturers when they are notified of the recall to assure the safe braking operation of their vehicles.

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