U. S. Department of Transportation

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Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY
July 6, 1978

NHTSA 68-78 (Cook)
Tel: 202-426-9550

DOT ANNOUNCES NEW MARKINGS
FOR MOTOR VEHICLE CONTROLS

In an effort to improve driver recognition, control knobs and instrument panel displays on 1981 model year passenger vehicles will bear internationally adopted symbols, the Department of Transportation announced today.

The new rule, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 101-80, issued by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, is effective for 1981 model passenger cars, multipurpose passenger vehicles, trucks and buses with a gross vehicle weight rating of less than 10,000 pounds.

The rule requires that most controls and displays be identified with specific symbols, as opposed to the present standard No. 101 that requires only certain controls to be identified with specified words, with the use of symbols as an optional supplement.

Symbols convey information faster and with less chance of human error than words, NHTSA said. Manufacturers who sell vehicles both domestically and abroad can realize significant savings by using internationally standardized symbols, the federal safety agency added.

However, words will continue to be used for those controls and displays for which no internationally agreed upon symbols have yet been established.

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The new standard specifies symbols that have been adopted by the International Standards Organization (ISO). The NHTSA worked with ISO under the auspices of the U. S. Department of State on the development of the internationally accepted symbols. The standard requires manufacturers to provide symbols for the following controls: headlamps and taillamps, windshield wiping, windshield washing, windshield washing and wiping combined, hazard warning signal, clearance lamps (for trucks), heating and/or air conditioning fan, windshield defrosting and defogging system, and rear window defrosting and defogging system. Symbols will also be required for the following instrument panel displays: turn signal indicator, fuel level, engine coolant temperature, oil pressure, seat belts, highbeam lights, hazard warning, and electrical charge.

Reflecting the most recent technological developments, the new standard provides that digital display readouts may be expressed in terms of words only and that speedometers should be labeled in both English miles per hour and metric kilometers per hour speeds.

NHTSA said that the current standard has now been amended to allow the manufacturers the option of complying with either the existing Standard 101 or the new regulation before Sept. 1, 1980.

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FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
July 7, 1978

NHTSA 74-78 (Boaz)
Tel. No. 202-426-9550

NO PROBLEM FOUND IN CHRYSLER
OMNI/HORIZON HANDLING

An evaluation performed by the U. S. Department of Transportation does not show evidence of a safety problem in the stability and handling characteristics of Chrysler's subcompact Dodge Omni and Plymouth Horizon vehicles.

That conclusion was announced today by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), whose engineers evaluated the Chrysler cars at two different sites during the last two weeks.

The tests were ordered by NHTSA Administrator Joan Claybrook, after Consumers Union, an independent testing organization, announced June 14 that it found the cars to be "unacceptable" because of problems in stability and handling.

"On the basis of the evaluations of the two handling tests used by Consumers Union, and results of these and other tests from a sample of vehicles, including the Omni and Horizon, the engineers could not find a safety problem involving the stability and control characteristics of the Omni/Horizon cars," Claybrook said.

Three NHTSA engineers and two independent vehicle dynamics experts from the Highway Safety Research Institute (HSRI), University of Michigan, visited Chrysler Corp.'s Chelsea, Mich., Proving Ground to observe and participate in handling and stability tests on Chrysler Omni/Horizon cars and other vehicles.

To prevent any possible bias attributable to the particular cars that Chrysler made available for the evaluation, the NHTSA test team rented a Plymouth Horizon and included it in the test sample at Chrysler. The performance of the rented vehicle was comparable to the Chrysler test cars.

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The engineers tested 13 other cars representing three domestic auto manufacturers and 5 foreign makes. Some of the other cars exhibited responses similar to those of the Omni/Horizon in the two CU tests.

In addition to the two tests used by CU, three other evaluation tests were conducted by the agency and Chrysler drivers at the Chrysler facility. These included a constant radius limit cornering test, a rough road test (potholes and bumps), and an on-road subjective evaluation test. The results for the Omni/Horizon were:

A. The constant radius limit cornering test (200 ft. radius circle) showed the Chrysler vehicles to have performance characteristics at least comparable to the other vehicles tested.

B. The "pothole and bump" test showed the vehicles to be highly resistant to road-induced course deflections, even under conditions where rims were bent and tires deflated.

C. The on-road test showed the vehicles to be stable and controllable under normal and severe cornering on both smooth and rough, rural type roads.

The same three NHTSA engineers and one HSRI representative also visited the Consumers Union test facility at Lime Rock, Conn. for similar testing. At both test facilities, the two tests which provided the basis for Consumers Union's unacceptable rating of the Omni/Horizon were performed a number of times. In the first test, known as the free control test, the driver quickly turned the steering wheel approximately 90 degrees, and then kept both hands off the wheel while maintaining a constant throttle. The second test was a simulated accident avoidance maneuver in which the driver negotiated back and forth lane changes, around cone markers, in rapid succession. Both tests were performed at speeds ranging between 45 and 55 miles per hour.

At both test facilities the particular responses described in the July 1978 issue of Consumer Reports magazine were essentially duplicated with the Omni/Horizon cars.

In addition to the tests, Administrator Claybrook, Deputy Administrator Howard Dugoff and technical staff of NHTSA met at length in separate meetings with technical staff of both the Chrysler Corp. and Consumers Union.

Analysis of all tests and information provided at the meetings showed that neither the tests used by Consumers Union nor the results of those tests seem to have any material significance to handling characteristics which would affect the safety of the Omni/Horizon vehicles in real world use.

The free control test bears no significant relationship to any real world driving task or maneuver. Also, the engineers found no correlation between the free control test and the obstacle avoidance test, which itself has only limited applicability as a real world handling evaluation test.

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FOR SUNDAY AMs RELEASE
July 9, 1978

NHTSA FINDS
FIRESTONE 500 DEFECT

NHTSA 75-78 (Boaz)
Tel. No. 202-426-9550

The U. S. Department of Transportation today announced that it has made an initial determination that a safety related defect exists in Firestone 500 Steel Belted Radial tires and identical tires manufactured by the Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. under other brand names.

The determination is the result of an investigation conducted by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), which was begun last February because of more than 500 reports from consumers charging blowouts, tread separations and chunking, sidewall blisters and cracks, and out of round condition.

NHTSA says its investigation has included the analysis of more than 6,000 reports from consumers alleging more than 14,000 individual tire failures, 29 deaths, more than 50 injuries, and hundreds of property damage accidents. Some 15 million of the Firestone Steel Belted Radial tires are still in use on the highways, according to estimates provided by the manufacturer.

The safety agency says a comparison of Firestone's tire adjustment information with data from five other major manufacturers for comparable time periods shows that the Firestone 500 Steel Belted Radial tire has the highest rate of adjustment--at least two times greater--than any other manufacturer or tire line. Based on production figures provided by Firestone, more than 1.5 million of the 500 Steel Belted Radials have already been adjusted by the company.

The identical tires are also sold by Montgomery Ward Co. under the brand name "Grappler Radial" 8000 series, and by Shell Oil Co. dealers under the brand name "Super Shell Steel Radial."

The agency says its investigation has clearly established that these tires have failed in significant numbers and that the failures are characterized by blowouts, tread separations, and other failures which have resulted in deaths, injuries, and property damage accidents. The agency believes that these tires still on the highway will continue to fail and that future accidents will occur. Therefore, an initial determination of a safety related defect has been made. The agency believes Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. should immediately issue a recall of these tires.

NHTSA also announced that a public hearing will be held Aug. 7, 1978 at which time Firestone company and any other interested parties, including consumers, will be given the opportunity to present testimony, data, and information relating to this defect finding.

After analysis of the data and information presented at the public hearing, NHTSA will then make a final determination. If that final decision upholds the initial safety defect finding, then the agency can order the Firestone company to conduct a recall of the tires.

The consumer reports analyzed by NHTSA during its investigation included more than 2,200 separate reports alleging more than 7,300 individual tire failures received directly by the agency, those forwarded by consumer groups, and those forwarded by members of Congress on behalf of their constituents. Information provided by Firestone in response to NHTSA inquiries and to Congressman John E. Moss of California in a public hearing held on May 23 was also analyzed by NHTSA.

NHTSA said it is continuing its investigation of the 500 Steel Belted Radials and all other Firestone steel belted radial tire lines. Presently, the agency is seeking enforcement in U. S. District Court in the District of Columbia of a special order directed to Firestone seeking answers to questions about its steel belted radials. Firestone has refused to answer many of the questions.

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FOR RELEASE MONDAY
July 10, 1978

NHTSA 69-78 (Cook)
Tel: 202-426-9550

STEPHENSON NAMED
TO NHTSA R&D POST

The appointment of Dr. R. Rhoads Stephenson as Associate Administrator for Research and Development in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) was announced today by NHTSA Administrator Joan Claybrook.

Stephenson is responsible for all NHTSA research in highway traffic safety.

An authority in the field of automotive engine technology, Dr. Stephenson, 42, was most recently employed by the Caltech/Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif. He is a native of Evanston, Ill. and received his Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering in 1961 from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

Dr. Stephenson's responsibilities at Jet Propulsion Laboratory, (JPL) as Manager of the Systems Analysis Section, were concentrated on advanced automotive engine technology; electric and hybrid vehicles; several urban transit systems; solar, geothermal and other emerging energy sources; and environmental analyses.

Among his major accomplishments at JPL, Dr. Stephenson was a key participant in an evaluation study for Ford Motor Company of advanced automotive engines that could be considered as alternatives to conventionally designed automobile engines. The final report of that study, entitled "Should We Have a New Engine?, An Automotive Power Systems Evolution" was published in August 1975 and received widespread attention. On the basis of his work in this area, he was selected as a National Aeronautics and Space Administration representative and served on the design panel of the government-wide study of "Motor Vehicle Goals Beyond 1980."

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CONSUMER ADVISORY

FOR RELEASE MONDAY
July 10, 1978

NHTSA 70-78 (Ames)
Tel.No. (202) 426-0670

NEW BROCHURE ON MOTORHOME
AND PICKUP CAMPER SAFETY

The U.S. Department of Transportation has released a new brochure on "Motorhome and Pickup Camper 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 motorhomes and pickup campers.

Joan Claybrook, NHTSA administrator, said that overloading of recreational vehicles is still a major safety problem. The new brochure and its companion publication released last March, "Travel and Camper Trailer Safety," provide valuable guidance to recreational vehicle owners on how to avoid overloading and other safety problems.

The new publication provides basic rules for safe operation of a motorhome or pickup camper, describes the matching of a slide-in camper to a pickup truck, provides guidance on weighing and loading, and provides maintenance, safety, and fuel conservation tips.

Single copies of either 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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FOR RELEASE TUESDAY
July 11, 1978

NHTSA 72-78 (Paris)
Tel.No. (202) 426-9550

HIGER SPEEDS A FACTOR AS HIGHWAY DEATHS RISE

Increased driving speeds, coupled with growth in traffic volume, raised the number of traffic fatalities in the United States last year to 47,671, a 4.7 percent increase over the 45,523 killed in 1976.

This statistic and other facts and figures on highway safety were made public today by the U.S. Department of Transportation with the release of two annual reports transmitted to the Congress by President Carter.

The reports, required by the Highway Safety Act of 1966 and the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966, are submitted annually to the Congress. They constitute a review by DOT's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration of the causes and complexity of the traffic safety problem, and the programs and research undertaken by the federal government to reduce highway deaths and injuries.

An increase in the average speeds on the highway, the growing automotive population, the greater number of miles driven and the growing disparity in weight among the total vehicle population, all were factors in the higher death toll, NHTSA says.

The reports note that in the seven years following establishment of a national traffic safety effort in 1966, the fatality rate (the number of deaths per 100 million miles driven) declined steadily from 5.48 to 4.11. Then came the fuel crisis and the permanent imposition of the national 55 miles per hour maximum speed limit in January 1974.

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The safety effects were dramatic. In 1974, traffic deaths fell by nearly 9,000, from 54,052 to 45,196, and the fatality rate declined from 4.11 to 3.52. The next two years brought little change in the number of deaths on the highway, but there were some further reductions in the fatality rate, despite a fairly substantial growth in the number of miles driven, NHTSA reports.

The 55 mph speed limit proved its value as a fuel economy measure and as a livesaving program. But as average speeds began to inch up and the traffic volume continued to grow, the number of fatalities also went up, NHTSA found. There were more bicycles, motorcycles and mopeds on the road and deaths related to these particular vehicles also rose.

The reports make these observations:

o The rising toll adds up to an enormous drain on the national economy; the annual direct economic cost of highway deaths is currently estimated to be more than $43 billion.

o If the fatality rate had remained constant since 1967, the direct economic cost probably would now exceed $76 billion each year and traffic deaths would approximate 77,000 annually.

o There would have been an additional 150,000 highway deaths since 1967, had the fatality rate remained constant.

o Motor vehicle safety standards and improved highway design have contributed greatly to this reduction. About half of the fatality reduction since 1974 is attributed to lower speeds.

o In spite of the contributing factors that have curbed the highway death toll, traffic fatalities continue to remain the sixth leading cause of death in the United States.

o Traffic accidents are the number one killer among the 5-to-9-year-olds, and number two among those 9 to 14 years of age. In the 15-to-34-year old category, highway deaths are the primary killer.

o In addition to the thousands who are killed each year, hundreds of thousands more are injured, many seriously, and many permanently. For example, car crashes are the number one cause of epilepsy and paraplegia in the United States.

o The fatality rate, which fell to an all-time low in 1976 of 3.23, rose slightly to 3.25 in 1977.

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FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
July 14, 1978

NHTSA 76-78
Contact: Bob Cook
Phone: (202) 426-9550

DOT ANNOUNCES REGULATION
FOR UNIFORM TIRE GRADING

A new simplified guide will help consumers buy the best tire for the money, the Department of Transportation said today.

A uniform tire quality grading regulation was made public today by DOT's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and will become effective next year.

Tires will be rated on expected treadwear, traction and temperature resistance.

Beginning March 1, 1979 for bias-ply tires and September 1, 1979 for bias-belted tires, a paper label listing the respective grades must be attached to the tire tread. Six months after these dates, manufacturers will be required to mold the grading information into the tire sidewall.

The grading system will be applied to radial ply tires at a later date, NHTSA said.

"When this standard goes into effect the consumer will be better equipped to compare quality and price among competing tire brands," NHTSA Administrator Joan Claybrook said.

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TREADWEAR

The treadwear grade will not specify the actual mileage the buyer can expect the tire to last, NHTSA said, but rather the relative tread life compared to other types or brands of tires. The relative ratings are based upon actual performance over a test course established by the agency at San Angelo, Tex.

Using a graded numerical sequence as follows: 80, 90, 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160, etc. the tire with the highest number in this category should give the greatest mileage when driven under the same conditions. A tire graded at 150, for example, would be expected to wear one and a half times as well on the government test track as a tire graded 100, NHTSA said. Most people could expect to get 50 percent more miles from this particular tire, than one graded at 100, when driven under the same conditions, with proper inflation, balancing, and wheel alignment.

This comparative grading method was chosen, NHTSA emphasized, because the actual performance of a tire may vary considerably in different areas of the country and because of different driving habits, service practices, road characteristics, and climate.

TRACTION

Under the present rule, traction would be identified by the following symbols 0, *, **, which had been included in the original notice of rulemaking. However, the NHTSA has issued a new notice of proposed rulemaking which would change the symbols for traction to A, B, and C for clarity and to aid consumers in using the system. A tire graded A, in this category, would offer the best traction. The proposal, if accepted, would change the system prior to the effective date.

TEMPERATURE

Temperature resistance grades are of importance to the motorist, NHTSA said, since excessive high temperatures can cause the material of the tire to degenerate and reduce tire life, leading to sudden failure. Tests for this property are conducted under controlled laboratory conditions to produce a comparative grading system of A, B, and C.

Originally issued by NHTSA more than three years ago, implementation of the regulation has been delayed by litigation initiated by several domestic tire manufacturers. On Sept. 2, 1976, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati upheld most of the regulation's provisions. The tire manufacturers petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to review the Sixth Circuit Court's decision. The high court, however, declined to order a review of the lower court's decision.

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FOR RELEASE MONDAY
July 17, 1978

NHTSA 71-78 (Ames)
Tel.No. (202) 426-0670

DEFECT INVESTIGATORY CASES REPORT

FOR JANUARY -- APRIL 1978

During this reporting period, 12 new safety-related defect investigations were opened and four were terminated after the manufacturer initiated recall action. At the end of the reporting period, 73 safety-related defect investigations were in progress, including two which 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 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590.

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Reporting Period: January -- April, 1978

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 does, 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 (as amended). The NHTSA objectives are to discover whether alleged problems do occur, the cause of such problems, and whether the problems result in accidents, property damage, fatalities, 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.)

January 1978:

Case Number:	C8-05
Manufacturer:	Ford Motor Co.
Make:	Ford
Model:	C-Series trucks manufactured between 1972 and December 5, 1977 equipped with 361, 389, or 391 CID FT engines and AT-540 transmissions.
Year(s):	1972-1978

SUBJECT: Alleged cracking and/or separation of engine cooling fan blades.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

The investigation was initiated after the NHTSA received failure data from the U.S. Postal Service which operates a fleet of over 1,000 model C600 Ford trucks. Allegedly, engine cooling fans 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.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

These blades are of a rigid and laminated construction joined together by spot welds. They are not the same as the "flex-fans" which are the subject of a separate NHTSA investigation.

Problem Symptoms: No reliable pre-failure symptoms.

Note: After the investigation was opened, the manufacturer announced that the vehicles would be recalled for replacement of engine cooling fans with a service fan of new design. Recall #78V-005

Case Number: C8-06
Manufacturer: American Motors Corp.
Make: American Motors
Model: Hornet and Gremlin
Year(s): 1975-1977

SUBJECT: Alleged failure of power steering hose due to location near exhaust manifold.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

The investigation was initiated based on 55 complaints and more than 27 alleged fires causes by failure of the power steering hose.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

The power steering hose is routed too near the exhaust manifold, and is susceptible to heat damage. The hose can rupture, resulting in loss of power steering. Power steering fluid can also leak on hot engine components, creating a fire threat.

Problem Symptoms: Possible visual indication of cracking or deterioration of the hose.

NOTE: After the investigation was begun, the manufacturer initiated a recall campaign. Recall #78V-070

Case Number: C8-07
Manufacturer: American Motors Corp.
Make: American Motors
Model: Passenger cars and Jeeps
Year(s): 1975-1976

SUBJECT: Alleged ignition system failure resulting in vehicle stalling.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

Investigation initiated based on 64 complaints and one report of an accident allegedly due to ignition system problems resulting in vehicle stalling. In addition, vehicles with power steering and power brakes would experience impaired steering and stopping capability when power is lost.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

Allegedly, these vehicles built with two-wire connectors as part of the ignition system fail to allow current flow needed to support electronic control of engine ignition.

NOTE: After the investigation was begun, the manufacturer initiated a recall campaign. Recall #78V-065

Case Number: C8-08
Manufacturer: Kool Klutch Co.
Make: Kool Klutch Engine Cooling Fans (Flex-fans)
Models: Kool Klutch and Imperial
Year(s): 1973-1977

SUBJECT: Alleged cracking and/or separation of engine cooling fan blades.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

The agency is investigating reports of breaking fan blades which could result in vehicle damage and personal injury. The investigation includes fans manufactured and sold for the after-market. The agency knows of at least 13 complaints alleging breakage of flex-fans of this type, including three involving injuries.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

These are fans produced as replacements for after-market use. These fans have curved, flexible blades that flex or flatten out as fan rotating speed increases with an increase in engine operating speed. This reduction in fan blade pitch results in less horsepower consumption from operation, and results in noise reduction. Apparently, the constant flexing of blades over a period of time, coupled with other factors, results in metal fatigue which causes the fan blades to crack and break off.

Problem Symptoms: No reliable pre-failure symptoms.

February, 1978

Case Number: C8-18
Manufacturer: Firestone Tire and Rubber Co.
Make: Firestone Tires
Model: All Steel-Belted Radial
Year(s): Various

SUBJECT: Alleged tire failure which may result in loss of vehicle control.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

This investigation is the result of over 500 reports from consumners indicating blowouts, out-of-round tires, and tread separations in tires manufactured by Firestone. These include reports alleging 10 accidents involving two injuries.

Case Number: C8-19
Manufacturer: Ford Motor Co.
Make: Mercury
Model: Capri
Year(s): 1971-1978

SUBJECT: Alleged breakage of floor-mounted gear shift lever or detachment of lever from transmission.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

Investigation was initiated after NHTSA received 18 owner complaints of gear shift malfunctions in these vehicles. The manufacturer reported 28 other owner complaints and 27 dealer reports including one accident allegedly due to the problem.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

The investigation involves two separate types of manual transmission, floor-mounted gear shift levers. Depending on the type used, the gear shift lever may break due to fatigue, or the lever may separate from the transmission. In either case, the driver will be unable to shift gears.

Problem Symptoms: With one type of lever, the vehicle operator may be informed of impending failure by a looseness of the lever assembly; with the other type of lever there would be no warning.

Case Number:	C8-20
Manufacturer:	Ford Motor Co.
Make:	Ford-Mercury
Model:	Granada-Monarch
Year(s):	1975-1977

SUBJECT: Alleged malfunction of remote centering power steering control valve resulting in steering instability.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

The investigation is based on 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.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

These vehicles are equipped with a non-integral linkage boost, power steering system. This system employs a hydraulically-operated power cylinder and control valve to provide power steering assist.

Steering wheel rotation causes axial movement of a spool within the control valve. This movement allows power steering fluid, under pressure from the pump, to enter the power cylinder and cause the piston within the cylinder to move. Since the power cylinder is connected to the vehicle's steering linkage, the axial movement of the power cylinder piston provides a corresponding movement of the vehicle's steering linkage, thus providing power-assisted steering.

Problem Symptoms: The condition is characterized by a tendency of the vehicle to wander or dart and weave during operation, and difficulty in steering the vehicle straight and within one lane of a roadway.

March, 1978

Case Number:	C8-22
Manufacturer:	Overhead Door Co.
Make:	Overhead Door Convertor Dolly
Model:	Jifflox 5000 Series
Year(s):	1975-1977

SUBJECT: Alleged malfunction of Wagner anti-lock system in dolly wheels.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

The investigation was initiated in response to a petition from T.I.M.E. D.C., Inc., of Lubbock, Texas which bought 53 of these dollies and experienced anti-lock sensor problems.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

The dolly convertor is an item attached to a two-axle truck, tractor. It has an axle and wheels of its own and is used to convert truck tractors to provide a three-axle configuration for the rear wheels instead of two axles for use in states where axle weight limitations require three-axle application. It can also be used between two trailers in a doubles operation. The wheels on the dolly convertor were built with aluminum hubs. The machining on these hubs was not as precise as that found on steel-type hubs. The wheels contain the Wagner anti-lock system with the sensor in the wheel hub. Because of imprecise machining, the wheel speed sensor in the hubs produced an erratic signal which can cause erratic brake operation.

Problem Symptoms: Erratic brake operation.

NOTE: After being notified of this problem, the Overhead Door Co. recalled the vehicles for problem correction. Recall 78V-053

April, 1978:

Case Number:	C8-23
Manufacturer:	General Motors Corp.
Make:	Oldsmobile, Chevrolet, Buick
Model:	Starfire V6, Monza V8, Skylark V6
Year(s):	1975

SUBJECT: Alleged failure of front wheel bearings which may damage or break wheel spindles with possible separation of the wheel from the vehicle.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

Investigation was based on 11 consumer complaints in NHTSA files reporting front wheel bearing problems involving three broken spindles and three other damaged spindles. Two of the spindle failures resulted in near accidents.

Information from the manufacturer indicated 23 other reports of wheel bearing problems involving 16 damaged or broken spindles. These reports included five accidents allegedly caused by front wheel bearing failure. No serious injuries were reported.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

The 1975 Monzas, Starfires, and Skyhawks are basically similar vehicles which use the same frame, suspension, brakes, and body. The Starfires and Skyhawks have a V-6 engine, whereas the Monza uses the same four-cylinder engine as the Chevrolet Vega or the optional 262 CID V-8 engine. All of these vehicles use the same front spindles, wheel bearings, and brakes as the Chevrolet Vega. Drum brakes are used at the rear and disc brakes, with solid, unvented rotors are used on the front. The spindle supports the front wheel and wheel bearing, allowing the wheel to detach if the spindle breaks.

Allegedly, front brakes develop excessive heat due to front suspension weight and design of the front disc brake rotors. Heat from the brake rotor is transferred to the wheel bearing, causing wheel bearing grease to be heated to a liquid stage. Loss of lubricant can cause wheel bearing and spindle failure.

Problem Symptoms: Complete bearing failure is usually preceded by an audible noise which may alert the driver to the condition before total failure. However, if the driver is not sufficiently alert or knowledgeable to respond to the noise, or if he doesn't hear the warning due to other sounds within the vehicle (e.g., radio), wheel bearing failures can result in loss of vehicle control.

Case Number:	C8-24
Manufacturer:	Broad Wheels Co.
Make:	Broadwheel
Model:	13" and 14" Chrome-Plated Trailer Wheels
Year(s):	All

SUBJECT: Alleged separation of the spider from the rim causing the wheel to separate from the trailer.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

Investigation is based on more than 100 reports of broken or cracked wheels, many from boat trailer manufacturers whose customers reported wheel failures.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

These wheels consist of rims into which wheel discs are pressed, aligned, and welded. Allegedly, the welds crack permitting the rim to separate from the center disk. This can result in the rim and tire rolling free, causing the axle to drag on the pavement, and resulting in loss of vehicle control.

Problem Symptoms: Cracks may be visible in the weld area where the center disk is joined to the rim.

Case Number:	C8-25
Manufacturer:	Chrysler Corp.
Make:	Dodge
Model:	Vans, Models B-300, MB-300, CB-300, MB-400, and CB-400
Year(s):	1973-1977

SUBJECT: Alleged temporary loss of front brakes due to caliper contact with the frame.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

The investigation was based upon receipt of eight reports covering in excess of 40 instances of temporary failure of the front brakes. One accident was reported to the NHTSA. The manufacturer stated that it had received reports of nine alleged accidents, two with unspecified injuries.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

Dodge B300 Trucks are the largest of the Dodge compact trucks commonly know as vans. The subject vehicles have single piston, sliding caliper type front disc brakes. Wheel stops incorporated into the steering mechanism limit the angularity of the steering in full turns.

A combination of front disc brake pad wear and wheel stop rivet wear can result in contact between the disc brake caliper and the frame longitudinal rail under full turn conditions. This contact moves the caliper outboard, resulting in some clearance between the disc brake pad and rotor and can cause a complaint of increased brake pedal travel during the stop following a full turn. Initial brake pedal movement required to overcome the clearance increases gradually with brake pad and wheel stop rivet wear, and full front brake system pedal output cannot be obtained until the clearance is closed. Once the clearance is closed, subsequent brake pedal applications will respond normally. Rear brake output is not affected.

Problem Symptoms: Increased brake pedal travel during the stop following a full turn. As increased wear occurs, the first stop after a full turn may give the driver the impression that his brakes are inoperable as only the rear brakes will apply, with consequent greater stopping distance being required.

Case Number:	C8-26
Manufacturer:	Ford Motor Co.
Make:	Ford
Model:	Heavy Truck Models B,C,F,L.W, and DCL
Year(s):	1975-1978

SUBJECT: Alleged failure, while in motion, of wiring harness connecting rear wheel sensor junction block to anti-lock computer module, resulting in reduced braking capability.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

This investigation was based on a petition submitted by Mr. R. E. Fritz of Palmer Transportation Inc., Chester, New York and information furnished by Mr. D. K. Strout of Wilson Freight Company, Cincinnati, Ohio. No property damage or injury accidents have been substantiated as a result of the reported failures.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

This wiring harness connects the rear wheel speed sensor junction block to the anti-lock computer module. The wiring harness transmits electrical signals from the wheel speed sensors to the brake anti-lock computer module. Complete failure or intermittent open circuits of the wire(s) could cause the anti-lock system to be inoperative on the affected axle(s), causing erratic operation of the brake system and difficulty in controlling the vehicle.

Allegedly, the problem occurs because the manufacturer's design does not secure the harness to keep it from flexing during vehicle movement. Flexing apparently causes the wire(s) in the harness to fail.

Problem Symptoms: A malfunction should cause the anti-lock warning light to illuminate, warning the driver.

SAFETY-RELATED DEFECT INVESTIGATORY CASES TERMINATED THIS REPORTING PERIOD

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

Also Note: All of the cases listed below were terminated after the manufacturer initiated recall action to correct the problems.

Case Number: 132
Manufacturer: General Motors Corp.
Make: All
Model: All with Quadrajet Carburetor
Year(s): 1965-1969

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Fuel leakage at plug resulting in fire potential.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: Recall No. 76V-160.

Case Number: 140
Manufacturer: Ford Motor Co.
Make: Ford, Mercury
Model: Mustang, Cougar
Year(s): 1968,1969

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Inboard pivot failures. Seat back could collapse resulting in loss of vehicle control.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: Recall No. 77V-043.

Case Number: C4-23
Manufacturer: General Motors Corp.
Make: Buick
Model: Opel
Year(s): 1964-1971

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Taillight mounting bolt can penetrate fuel tank in right, rear-end impacts at speeds below 10 mph. Vehicle fire can result.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: Recall No. 77V-048.

Case Number: C3-02
Manufacturer: American Honda Corp.
Make: Honda Motorcycle
Model: CB 450, 500, 750 and K4, K8
Year(s): 1970-1977

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Gas tank filler cap can become dislodged, allowing gas to be ignited after vehicle crash.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: Recall No. 77V-233.

Case Number: C3-03
Manufacturer: Chrysler Corp.
Make: Chrysler, Dodge, Plymouth
Model: C-Body
Year(s): 1969-1972

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Bulkhead electrical connector becomes disconnected resulting in complete loss of electrical power.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: Recall No. 77V-201.

Case Number: C7-41
Manufacturer: Neway Division, Lear Siegler Inc.
Make: Neway Trailer Ride Suspension System
Model: AR III
Year(s): Various

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Suspension system pivot bolt connection lock nut may loosen due to insufficient torque, resulting in erratic vehicle handling and possibility of tire fire.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: Recall No. 77E-024.

Case Number: C8-05
Manufacturer: Ford Motor Co.
Make: Ford
Model: C-Series Trucks
Year(s): 1972-1978

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Cracking and/or separation of engine cooling fan blades.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: Recall No., 78V-005

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

I. INVESTIGATIONS

Report for Period Ending: April 30, 1978

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.

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NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

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Period Ending: April 30, 1978

CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
C2-61	Ford	Ford Mercury	1969-1971	15 x 6.5 Single Piece Wheel	Disc Failure Could Result In Wheel Loss.
C3-34	General Motors	Light Duty Trucks	1966-1971	Rear Axle Control Arm	Alleged Rear Axle Control Arm Failures Could Effect Vehicle Control.
C3-35	International Harvester	Travelall 1110 4x4	1972-1973	Steering Arm Ball	Alleged Steering Instability, Upon Hard or Panic Brake Use Vehicle May Swerve Upon Braking Action.
C3-43	General Motors	Cadillac Eldorado & Oldsmobile	1967-1973	Front Wheel Mounting Bolts	Alleged Failure of Front Wheel Mounting Bolts Could Result in Loss of Wheels.
C4-07	Ford	Ford, Mercury	1970-1971	Hood Latch	Failure of Latch Mechanism Could Result in Hood Popup Obscuring Driver Vision.
C4-08	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.
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.

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NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

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Period Ending: April 30, 1978

CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
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.
C4-18	Ford	Fairlane and Ranchero Mercury Montego Ford Falcon Mercury Comet	1965-1969 1965-1969 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.

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CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
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.
C4-35	Nissan	Datsun 510	1968-1971	Transverse Link	Alleged Transverse Link Failures. May Result in Loss of Vehicle Control.

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CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
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 Erractic 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.
C5-01	General Motors	Chevrolet Corvettes	1964-1974	Rear Wheel Bearing	Failure of Rear Wheel Bearings. Wheels May Bind up or Lock.

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CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
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.
C6-22	American Motors	Pacer	1975	Power Steering Gear	Alleged Leakage of Rack and Pinion Seal Resulting in Possible Loss of Steering Control.

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	CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
	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.
(3)	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.
(6)	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.
(2)	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.
(3)	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.

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Period Ending: April 30, 1978

	CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
(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.
(3)	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.
(4)	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.
(7)	C7-34	Hollywood Accessories	Model 646	All	Hydraulic Jack	Leveling Mechanism May Fail If Load is not Centered on Jack Saddle.

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	CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
(5)	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.
(5)	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	Mercury Capri	1971-1972	Headlight Switch	Switch May Fall Apart Causing Headlights and Taillights to Cease Operation.
	C7-40	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.
(3)	C8-01	General Motors	Cadillac	1975-1977	Electronic Fuel Injection System	Engine Compartment Fires Due to Possible Fuel Leakage in Fuel Injection System.
	C8-02	Ford	All Models with V-8 Engines and C-6 or FMX Transmissions	1973-1978	Transmission Linkage	Assembly Grommets May Fail. Transmission May Jump From Park to Reverse.

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	CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
	C8-03	Peugeot, Inc.	304 and 504	1972-1975	Seat Belt System	Retractor Fails to Operate Properly. Belt Becomes Damaged or Entangled.
	C8-04	Ford	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.
(3)	C8-06	American Motors	Hornet Gremlin	1975 1976 1977	Power Steering Hose	Power Steering Hose Fails Due to Location Next to Exhaust Manifold. Results in Loss of Power Steering and Possible Engine Compartment Fire.
(3)	C8-07	American Motors	All	1975,1976	Ignition System	Ignition System Failure Causes Stalling.
	C8-08	Kool Klutch Co.	Kool Flex Imperial	1973-1977	Engine Cooling Fan	Cracking and/or Separation of Engine Cooling Fan Blades.
	C8-18	Firestone Tire & Rubber Co.	All Steel Belted Radial	Various	Tires	Tire Failure May Result in Loss of Control.
	C8-19	Ford	Capri	1971-1978	Manual, Floor-Mounted Gear Shift Lever	Gear Shift Lever Breaks or Detaches From Transmission.
	C8-20	Ford	Granada Monarch	1975-1977	Power Steering Control Valve	Steering Instability.

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CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

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	CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
(3)	C8-22	Overhead Door Co.	Jifflox 5000 Series Convertor Dolly	1977	Anti-Lock Sensor	Sensor Produces an Erratic Signal to Driver's Anti-Lock Warning Light in Truck Lab.
	C8-23	General Motors	Olds Starfire V-6 Buick Skylark V-6 Chev Monza V-8	1975	Wheel Bearing	Wheel Bearing Failure May Damage or Break Wheel Spindles and Wheel Can Separate From Vehicle.
	C8-24	Broadwheel Co.	13" and 14" Wheel	All	Boat Trailer Wheels	Rim Detaches From Spider Due to Weld Failure, Causing Wheel to Separate from Trailer.
	C8-25	Chrysler Corp.	Dodge Vans, Models B-300, MB-300, CB-400, MB-400	1973-1977	Front Disc Brakes	Temporary Loss of Front Brakes Due to Caliper Contact with Frame.
	C8-26	Ford	Heavy Trucks Models B,C,F,L,W, and DCL	1975-1978	Wiring Harness Connecting Rear-Wheel Sensor Junction Block to Anti-Lock Computer Module	Failure of Wiring Due to Flexing While in Motion May Result in Reduced Braking Capability.
	C3-11	General Motors (IN LITIGATION 2-13-74)	Cadillac	1959-1960	Steering Pitman Arm	Fatigue Failure Causing Loss of Vehicle Control.

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CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

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CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
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 Shift Motor; Failure Due to Underpower. Could Result in Loss of Driver Visbility.
(1)	The manufacturer has recalled certain 1972, 1976 and 1977 model vehicles.				
(2)	Manufacturer has recalled 1976 model vehicles.				
(3)	Vehicles have been recalled by the manufacturer.				
(4)	Manufacturer has notified NHTSA of intent to initiate owner notification and recall.				
(5)	Manufacturer has recalled some models.				
(6)	Manufacturer has recalled 1974-1976 Volkswagen and Audi Fox models.				
(7)	Jacks are being recalled by the manufacturer.				

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

Official Business

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FIRST CLASS

U.S. Department of Transportation
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Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

CONSUMER ADVISORY

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY
July 27, 1978

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

OLDSMOBILE, BUICK AND PONTIAC
V-6s UNDER INVESTIGATION

A safety investigation into stalling problems in 1977 Oldsmobile, Buick and Pontiac automobiles with V-6 engines was announced today by the U. S. Department of Transportation.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is conducting the investigation which involves an estimated 445,000 cars. The safety agency has received 71 owner complaints reporting sudden, frequent stalling in various phases of vehicle operation.

General Motors Corp. reported to the agency it has received 944 complaints from its customers. In addition, the Buick and Pontiac divisions have issued service bulletins to their dealers providing instructions for servicing problems described as stalling or "cold driveability." Nine minor accidents are reported to have been caused by this problem.

Anyone experiencing this problem is urged to report it to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; Office of Defect Investigations; 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590. The agency's toll-free Auto Safety Hotline (800-424-9393 or in Washington, D.C. metro area 426-0123) can also be used to report this and other safety problems.

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NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY
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FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
July 28, 1978

NHTSA 79-78 (Cook)
Tel.No. (202) 426-9550

DOT APPROVES USE
OF NEW AUTO HEADLAMPS

The U. S. Department of Transportation today announced its approval of the use of new high intensity automobile headlamps that should improve drivers' nighttime seeing distance by up to 20 percent.

Combining the best features of American and European systems, the permitted maximum candlepower of high-beam headlamp systems has been raised from 75,000 to 150,000 candlepower under an amendment to a federal motor vehicle safety standard issued by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The amendment applies to both the traditional circular headlights and the newer rectangular systems as an option for the vehicle and aftermarket manufacturers. It is effective immediately.

"We consider this a reasonable compromise between the American sealed beam systems now in use and the unsealed, higher intensity European systems which have been sold illegally in this country for several years," said Joan Claybrook, administrator of NHTSA.

"Drivers will be able to see further at night without any appreciable increase in glare from oncoming vehicles and driving safety should be improved."

-more-

Ms. Claybrook said she expects that most manufacturers will use halogen type bulbs to achieve the higher illumination output. The new standard does not change the existing requirements for such established safety features as sealed beam construction and mechanical aiming capability that have distinguished American systems from European systems over the years.

Noting that a large volume of traffic deaths and injuries, not fully attributable to alcohol or fatigue, occur at night on rural roads, NHTSA said the number of such accidents might have been reduced with high intensity headlamps. Research indicates that the average night seeing distance for speeds of 50 miles per hour and higher is less than the average braking distance. Increasing the intensity of the high-beam headlamp systems to 150,000 candlepower should improve the nighttime seeing distance by more than 20 percent, the federal vehicle safety agency said.

Glare from the new vehicle headlights should not be a problem, NHTSA believes. There is only a slight increase in the glare, as measured by two cars illegally approaching on high beams of 150,000 candlepower. A reduction of seeing distance of only 1.5 percent should be registered as compared to today's headlight systems with 75,000 candlepower.

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CONSUMER ADVISORY

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
August 11, 1978

NHTSA 81-78 (Ames)
Tel: (202) 426-0670

1978 FAIRMONTS AND ZEPHYRS RECALLED
TO REPLACE WINDSHIELD WIPER LINKAGE

The Ford Motor Co. is recalling approximately 400,000 of its 1978 Ford Fairmont and Mercury Zephyr vehicles for replacement of the windshield wiper linkage, the U. S. Department of Transportation said today.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) said it urged Ford to conduct a recall campaign after receiving information concerning windshield wiper failures on these vehicles.

A NHTSA letter to the company cited a recent court decision relating to windshield wiper failures on 1971-1973 Mercury Capri vehicles which upheld the agency's finding that windshield wiper failures constitute a safety-related defect.

The Ford Motor Co. said the recall involves all 1978 model Fairmont and Zephyr vehicles produced between initial production and April 26, 1978. Owners of the affected vehicles will be notified to return their vehicles to dealers for replacement of the windshield wiper linkage with improved components of later design.

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FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
August 18, 1978

NHTSA -- 82-78 (Paris)
Tel. 202-426-9550

CONSUMER ADVISORY

NEW VEHICLE NUMBERING SYSTEM WILL SIMPLIFY IDENTIFICATION

Beginning in 1980, a car's identification number will become a more useful tool in combating auto theft and improving the efficiency of safety recall campaigns and accident investigations.

The U.S. Department of Transportation announced today a new federal standard designed to standardize and simplify the use of vehicle identification numbers.

Issued by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the new standard specifies the structure and meaning of numerals and letters used in the identification number. Standardized numbers also will assist the states in their extensive use for certification, registration, titling and inspection of vehicles.

The new standard amends NHTSA's existing standard No. 115. It becomes effective Jan. 1, 1980, for passenger cars and on Sept. 1, 1980, for all other vehicles.

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

The new standard requires manufacturers to provide an identification number that will uniquely identify each motor vehicle, without duplication, for a 30-year period. It would have to contain 16 characters plus a check digit. For passenger cars, the identification would include manufacturer, make and type of vehicle, model, line, series, engine type, and the year of manufacture. Similar information will be required at a later date for trucks, trailers, multipurpose vehicles, and motorcycles.

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CONSUMER ADVISORY

FOR RELEASE TUESDAY
August 29, 1978

NHTSA 85-78 (Ames)
Tel. No. (202) 426-0670

DOT ISSUES WARNING ON FORD
TRANSMISSION PROBLEMS

The U.S. Department of Transportation issued a Consumer Advisory today warning owners of certain Ford Motor Co. vehicles equipped with automatic transmissions to take precautions when parking their vehicles.

The warning came from the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) which is conducting a formal defect investigation involving certain 1970 through 1978 Ford Motor Co. passenger cars and light trucks. The NHTSA has reports of 777 accidents, 259 injuries and 23 fatalities allegedly caused by automatic transmissions jumping from "Park" into "Reverse" gear. The investigation involves an estimated 9 million Ford vehicles equipped with C6 or FMX transmissions.

The NHTSA also urged owners who have experienced this problem to report it promptly to the federal safety agency. The NHTSA would prefer to receive letters which summarize specific details about the problems experienced by the owner with the make, model and year of the vehicle, and where possible, the Vehicle Identification Number which is located on the dashboard. If owners are unable to write, they are urged to call the agency's toll-free auto safety hotline on 800-424-9393 (Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, 426-0123) with their information.

Precautions to be taken include turning off the engine, pushing the gear selector all the way to the "Park" position and pulling on the selector lever (without raising the lever) to make sure it is secured, and setting the parking brake. Vehicles should never be left unattended with their engines running -- not even for the brief period it may take to leave the vehicle to close a garage door, make a pickup at a store or check the mailbox at the end of your driveway.

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Joan Claybrook, NHTSA administrator said "we are pursuing this investigation on a priority basis and plan to complete it in the very near future. But at this time we want to report that a problem may exist between the Park and Reverse positions on the transmission gear selector system, leading the driver to erroneously believe the transmission is in Park. There is a tendency to slip into reverse gear because of engine vibration or even the closing of a door, if the transmission is not firmly engaged in the Park position."

Analysis of the problem by NHTSA indicates that the tendency of the transmission to slip into Reverse is increased if the shifting linkage between the gear selector and the transmission is not properly adjusted.

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CONSUMER ADVISORY

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY
August 30, 1978

NHTSA 83-78 (Ames)
Tel.No. (202) 426-0670

HATCHBACK OWNERS WARNED OF DANGERS TO CHILDREN

Owners of "hatchback" vehicles were warned by the U.S. Department of Transportation today to avoid driving with children riding in the luggage compartment, and to keep the hatchback closed whenever the engine is running.

The warning came in a consumer advisory issued by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Joan Claybrook, NHTSA Administrator, says that during the warm summer months the agency is receiving increasing reports of motorists driving with the hatchback in the up position, often with young children riding in the rear of the vehicle. This is exceedingly dangerous and creates a risk of serious injury even in relatively minor accidents, Claybrook warns. The NHTSA accident data files contain reports of at least 12 accidents in which passengers were ejected through the rear hatchback, resulting in five fatalities and 13 injuries.

Claybrook also noted that operating the vehicle with the hatchback open may expose all occupants to concentrations of exhaust fumes containing deadly carbon monoxide.

-more-

"For maximum safety, all vehicle occupants should ride in designated vehicle seating positions, and vehicle safety belts should be used. If child passengers are too small to use safety belts, adequate child restraint systems should be used," Claybrook said.

Parents who want more information on child restraint systems can obtain a copy of NHTSA's new booklet, "Child Restraint Systems for Your Automobile," 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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U.S. Department of Transportation
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Office of Public and Consumer Affairs
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FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
September 1, 1978

NHTSA -- 87-78 (Cook)
Tel. 202-426-9550

TRAFFIC DEATHS RISE 2%
IN FIRST SEVEN MONTHS OF 1978

Traffic fatalities in the United States during the first seven months of the year are running more than 2 percent above the number of deaths recorded for a similar period in 1977, the U. S. Department of Transportation said today.

Statistics compiled by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that the nation's traffic toll for the January-July 1978 period is estimated at 27,000.

NHTSA Administrator Joan Claybrook said the figures were particularly distressing and if this trend continues, the death count could reach 50,000 by the end of the year.

"If this happens," she said," "it would mark the first time since 1973 that the highway death toll reached 50,000." Last year, traffic fatalities totaled 47,671, a 4 percent increase over 1976.

In releasing the figures, Claybrook said it was essential for motorists to renew their vigilance on the highway, particularly with the upcoming Labor Day weekend, a summer period that traditionally results in heavy motor vehicle travel.

"These grim statistics are a cold reminder that we must redouble our efforts to drive safely and observe the 55 mile-per-hour national speed limit law. We cannot emphasize enough that compliance with the speed law has produced beneficial results, not only in lives saved but also in fuel conservation."

Motorists should also wear the safety belts available in most cars, and avoid drinking alcoholic beverages while driving, she said. Alcohol is involved in about one-half of all fatal accidents, and only one out of five Americans buckle up while driving.

- more -

"The simple act of buckling up can do much to reduce highway fatalities which now average 130 deaths a day," she noted. "Auto accidents are the leading cause of death for young people under the age of 25, account for over half of the nation's paraplegics, and are a major cause of epilepsy. So much of this tragic waste could be avoided by wearing safety belts."

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FOR RELEASE TUESDAY
September 5, 1978

NHTSA 86-78 (Ames)
Tel. No. (202) 426-0670

CONSUMER ADVISORY

23,000 SUBARU BRAT VEHICLES RECALLED FOR FUEL TANK DEFECT

SUBARU OF America, Inc., is recalling 23,000 of its 1978 model BRAT vehicles because of fuel tank leaks, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced today.

The company notified the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), that the fuel tanks on these vehicles may develop hairline cracks. The problem may be caused by a blockage in the fuel evaporative control system which leads to abnormally high pressure in the fuel tank and subsequent stress failure. The NHTSA knows of no accidents or injuries resulting from this problem.

The NHTSA cautions owners of these vehicles to examine their fuel tanks for bulges or signs of fuel leakage under the vehicle, and to contact their dealers immediately if such problems are observed.

Owners of the affected vehicles will be notified by Subaru with regard to inspection and correction of their vehicles.

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FOR RELEASE THURSDAY
SEPTEMBER 7, 1978

NHTSA -- 84-78 (Cook)
Tel. 202-426-9550

DOT URGES BETTER CONTROL OVER HIGH SPEED CHASES

High speed operations by police and emergency vehicles are a threat to highway safety and should be more closely controlled and monitored by local authorities, a U. S. Department of Transportation official said today.

As the federal safety agency responsible for traffic and motor vehicle safety, the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) stressed this point in recent testimony by Administrator Joan Claybrook before the U. S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations.

"Immediate action is needed to more accurately determine the degree and severity of problems associated with high speed chases," she said, and police officials should move to:

- Improve the quality and quantity of police pursuit data;
- Alert police officers to the safety hazards related to high speed chases;
- Encourage the establishment and improvement of police training for "hot pursuit;"
- Encourage all police officials to establish departmental policies, procedures, and guidelines for officers involved in high speed chases.

To meet an obvious need, NHTSA has developed an emergency vehicle driver course for operators of fire, ambulance and police vehicles. It is a three-part package containing a guide which explains the requirements for setting up such a course; instructors' manual and lesson plans, including a section on vehicle practices; and a trainee study guide for the operation of emergency vehicles.

- more -

The new course is designed to instruct or provide additional information on emergency vehicles for operators who have already passed the defensive driving course. It is expected to be available in late fall.

Claybrook also cited a report from the Connecticut Safety Commission highlighting the problem of fatal accidents and serious injuries resulting from emergency and police high speed operations. Illustrative of the problems now confronting police and safety officials nationwide, the report is being distributed to all state highway officials and state law enforcement administrators.

A review of accidents involving police, fire and ambulance vehicles in 1976 shows that there were 344 emergency vehicle accidents in Connecticut, with 10 persons killed and 321 injured. In the previous year, there were 6 deaths and 298 injuries as a result of 343 emergency vehicle accidents, the report stated.

The Commission's findings included the following recommendations:

1. Emergency response vehicles should be clearly defined by state law.

2. Lights on all emergency vehicles should be of uniform color to eliminate confusion on the part of motorists.

3. Training should be expanded to include special training and licensing of emergency response vehicle operators, with police officers receiving additional training in high speed pursuit driving.

4. Increased penalties for those attempting to flee from the police at high speeds.

5. Adoption by police departments of a specific detailed policy for officers involved in high speed pursuit, following the state police policy as a guide.

6. Institution of a public information campaign to advise motorists of their responsibilities towards emergency vehicles; the responsibilities of emergency vehicle operators towards others; and the role of motorists in aiding police, fire and emergency medical service personnel responding to an emergency.

Single copies of the study may be obtained by writing to: Connecticut Safety Commission, 79 Elm Street, Hartford, Conn., 06116.

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U.S. Department of Transportation

news:

Office of Public and Consumer Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE 10:00 A.M.
Thursday, September 7, 1978

NHTSA 88-78 (Paris)
Tel.No. (202) 426-9550

DOT SUPPORTS BILL TO IMPROVE TRUCKER SAFETY

The U.S. Department of Transportation today endorsed a bill it said would provide increased safety and comfort for truckers who drive tractor-trailer combinations.

Joan B. Claybrook, administrator of the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), told a Senate Subcommittee that the bill "reflects an increased federal concern about present state truck length laws which have resulted in the design of truck cabs that do not adequately provide for the safety and comfort of commercial truck drivers.

Claybrook testified before the Surface Transportation Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on Senate Bill 3431.

The bill would require that if a state sets limits on truck lengths used on the interstate system after June 1, 1980, it must set them on the trailer alone, or, if a state desires to set overall tractor-trailer length limits as well, the overall limit would have to exceed the tractor length by at least 15 feet.

She said the bill is designed "to place a federal priority on the welfare of the professional truck driver, while leaving to the states their existing authority to set truck length limits."

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Truck length is not regulated by federal law, and the states have typically set limits on the overall length of tractor-trailers. Since there is an economic benefit for the trucker to have as much of the vehicle devoted to carrying cargo as possible, truck combinations are generally designed to enlarge the capacity of their cargo-carrying units while staying within overall state length limits.

Any increase in cargo-carrying capacity under present law must therefore come at the expense of the size of the truck cabs and occupant compartments.

"The welfare of the drivers of commercial vehicles has often been ignored and even abused in some of the occupant compartment designs that serve as their workplace," Claybrook said. She cited examples such as the limited space between the driver and the dashboard causing a driver's knees to rest on the dashboard and the steering wheel to rest against the driver's stomach; and the well-known problem of the "doghouse" — the fiberglass cover on that part of the engine that protrudes into the cab that, when loose, is frequently responsible for engine fumes getting into the cab and which is responsible for the awkward placement of foot controls."

"The Department supports the bill," Claybrook said. "It provides significant opportunities for increased safety and driver comfort by setting a sufficient truck cab size that must be considered by the states in setting truck length limits."

She testified that while the bill could result in additional costs in some cases, the consideration of its economic implications is left to the individual states.

"While Secretary of Transportation Brock Adams and I have always opposed further increases in the lengths and weights of large trucks, the small additional allowance which this bill will foster is not so significant as to overshadow the great value of improved driver safety," she said.

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FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
Friday, September 15, 1978

NHTSA 91-78 (Ames)
Tel. No. 202-426-0670

1977 MODEL PORSCHE 911 VEHICLES
UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR FIRES

CONSUMER ADVISORY

A safety investigation into engine compartment fires in 1977 Porsche 911 vehicles was announced today by the U. S. Department of Transportation.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is conducting the investigation which involves an estimated 19,500 vehicles. The safety agency has received 53 reports of fires in the engine compartments of these vehicles. To date no injuries have been reported.

Although it has been reported that these fires may be fed by gasoline, it is suspected that the source of ignition may be related to a malfunction in the air conditioning units installed in these cars. All reports of fire received thus far involve vehicles equipped with air conditioning.

Anyone experiencing this problem is urged to report it to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Office of Defects Investigation, 400 Seventh St., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. The agency's toll-free Auto Safety Hotline (800-424-9393 or, in the Washington, D.C. metro area, 426-0123) can also be used to report this or other safety problems.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, September 21, 1978

NHTSA 92-78 (Paris)
Tel.No. (202) 426-9550

REPORT SAYS UTAH FATAL ACCIDENT
NOT CAUSED BY BRAKE FAILURE

An accident in August 1977 involving a tractor-trailer that rammed into a passenger car claiming the lives of four teenagers and critically injuring another was not the result of brake failure, according to a report issued today by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), ordered an investigation of the August 18, 1977, accident after the truck driver, who was not hurt, claimed that the brake system on his vehicle failed.

An accident team from Dynamic Science, Inc., an independent contractor experienced in accident investigation, conducted the probe. The accident occurred on a rain-slick highway at an intersection in Magna, Utah, about three miles west of Salt Lake City.

According to the Dynamic Science report:

No attempted braking prior to the collision is evident; extensive post crash inspection shows that the tractor-trailer's braking system was operable and that "brake failure can be precluded as a cause of this accident."

The accident occured when the teenagers' vehicle tried to turn left in front on the oncoming tractor-trailer. The truck driver contended that he tried to stop, but that antilock failure deprived him of any braking capability and resulted in his striking the teenagers' car. The observations of witnesses and various tests of the tractor-trailer's braking systems show this assertion to be groundless.

The driver in the vehicle ahead of the tractor-trailer stated that he crossed the intersection as the light turned red, and that the tractor-trailer was approximately 250 feet behind him.

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The driver of the vehicle behind the tractor-trailer, who is an experienced truck driver, estimated the tractor-trailer's distance from the intersection to be about 300 feet when the light turned red.

The investigation shows that the speed of the tractor-trailer was 50 miles per hour 250 to 300 feet prior to the intersection and still 48 mph at the point of impact. The report said normal retardation force of the truck's engine would have slowed the vehicle during any attempt to apply the brakes in the 250-to-300 foot distance, whether or not there was a brake failure. Also, the truck engine was equipped with a "Jake Brake" that uses engine compression as an added and effective source of retardation when stopping. Two witnesses, including the experienced truck driver, heard no sound of the typically loud "barking" sound of a Jake Brake.

It had rained prior to the accident and the tractor-trailer carried a load of hanging pork in an environment of congested traffic conditions. The possibility of jack-knifing on the wet surface because of the marginal distance available for stopping most probably influenced the truck driver's decision to run the red light and avoid possible loss of control of his vehicle in heavy traffic.

The driver's decision to run the light is further substantiated by witness accounts that the trailer's brake lights went on momentarily when the trailer-trailer was far from the intersection but then went out. The brake lights would have stayed on if the truck driver had continued to apply the brake.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, October 2, 1978

NHTSA -- 97-78 (Paris)
Tel. 202-426-9550

GOVERNMENT PLANS NATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON AUTOMOBILE CHILD RESTRAINT SYSTEMS

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

While a date and site for the conference have not yet been selected, the NHTSA said the meeting is aimed at grass roots organizations and guiding them on ways to educate parents to the importance of automobile child restraints.

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

"President Carter has proclaimed Monday, October 2, as Child Health Day to reaffirm our strong commitment to the health and well-being of our nation's children. One important form of preventive medicine we can all practice is to make sure children are protected in proper safety restraint systems each time they ride in a motor vehicle," said Ms. Claybrook.

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

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

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

- more -

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

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

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

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

That is why Tennessee passed a law which now requires parents to protect their young children when riding in motor vehicles by using safe child restraint systems. The NHTSA is helping Tennessee to inform the public about the new law and to evaluate its safety benefits for young children.

Last May, the NHTSA issued a new proposal designed to upgrade the current child restraint standard by amending it to include car beds, infant carriers and child harnesses. 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 a 6-month-old infant, instead of the presently prescribed static tests. A final rule is expected to be issued early next year.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, October 4, 1978

NHTSA -- 96-78 (Paris)
Tel. 202-426-9550

TWO APPOINTED TO KEY POSITIONS
IN HIGHWAY SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

The appointments of Michael M. Finkelstein and Frank A. Berndt to key positions in the Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration were announced today by agency Administrator Joan Claybrook.

Finkelstein, a 13-year veteran in the federal career service, assumes new duties as NHTSA's Associate Administrator for Rulemaking. Berndt takes over as the Associate Administrator for Enforcement after serving eight years in the agency's Office of Chief Counsel.

Finkelstein, a native of New York City, earned his bachelor's degree from Columbia University and his master's from Rutgers University in 1965 before embarking on a federal career as a management intern with the Post Office Department.

He joined the U. S. Department of Transportation in 1968 where he spent four years as a program analyst in the Secretary's Office of Planning and Program Review before becoming chief of that office's highway and mass transit program division.

In October 1976, Finkelstein was appointed Associate Administrator for Planning and Evaluation at the NHTSA where he was instrumental in formulating the agency's five-year program plan for rulemaking.

As Associate Administrator for Rulemaking, Finkelstein will oversee the Office of Vehicle Safety Standards, the Office of Automotive Fuel Economy Standards and the Office of Automotive Ratings.

Berndt, born in Cleveland, was graduated from Ohio State University in 1960 and later from Case-Western Reserve School of Law, where he served as editor of the Law Review. He is a member of the Bar of the State of Ohio and of the U. S. Supreme Court. Prior to his decision to study law, he held a variety of jobs and operated a small business.

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Since 1962, Berndt has been employed, with the exception of a brief period in private practice, as a litigation attorney with the Department of Labor (1962-1967), the National Labor Relations Board (1967-1970), and the NHTSA. He has served the federal safety agency as Assistant Chief Counsel of Litigation, Acting Chief Counsel and Deputy Chief Counsel.

As Associate Administrator for Enforcement, Berndt will be responsible for the Office of Defects Investigation, the Office of Fuel Economy Compliance and the Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, October 6, 1978

NHTSA -- 94-78 (Paris)
Tel. 202-426-9550

MEDICAL TECHNICIANS
HONOR DOT EMPLOYEE

An emergency medical technician award given annually by the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians has been named for a U. S. Department of Transportation employee.

The award, created last year, has been named the Robert E. Motley, REMTA, EMT of the Year Award. Motley is a highway safety management specialist in the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

REMTA is the title given to those persons who have successfully passed the Registered Emergency Medical Technician-Ambulance examination, which Motley helped develop. The national association represents more than 300,000 Emergency Medical Technicians and EMT-Paramedics across the nation.

NHTSA Administrator Joan Claybrook said the honor bestowed on Motley is well deserved because of the significant contributions he has made. "He, more than any other single individual in government, is responsible for the creation of the Emergency Medical Technician as a profession," she said.

Motley, 54, has been with NHTSA since 1969 and prior to that he was employed by HEW, the Social Security Administration and the U. S. Public Health Service.

Motley, who has structured and revised various EMT training-courses, participated in the development of the DOT advanced EMT training course as the national standard for paramedic training. He was instrumental in the development of the DOT 81-hour course package that has been provided to 26 countries.

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U.S. Department of Transportation
news:
Office of Public and Consumer Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, October 6, 1978

NHTSA -- 98-78 (Ames)
Tel. 202-426-0670

DOT WARNS OF POTENTIAL DANGER
IN SERVICING MULTIPIECE WHEELS

The U. S. Department of Transportation warned truck and bus drivers and maintenance personnel today of the potential dangers in servicing multipiece truck and bus wheels and also announced the availability of two revised safety charts which illustrate the precautions to be observed.

Last week the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) began an engineering analysis of possible safety related defects in multipiece truck and bus wheels. In addition, the agency has started work on rulemaking that would govern the construction of such wheels.

Multipiece wheels consist of two pieces (a rim base and a side ring) or three pieces (rim base, side ring or flange, and lock ring).

NHTSA Administrator Joan Claybrook asked the public to provide the government with information on any accidents involving multipiece wheels to help the agency with its engineering and rulemaking evaluations.

"We continue to receive reports of injuries and fatalities involving service personnel due to explosive disassembly of multipiece wheels. These accidents," she said, "in many cases are caused by failure to follow proper safety precautions or by using mismatched parts."

Claybrook said NHTSA has prepared safety information charts as part of a continuing campaign to alert truck and bus service personnel to the hazards involved when working with multipiece wheels.

One of the charts, called the "Safety Chart," illustrates the proper safety precautions to be followed when servicing multipiece truck and bus wheels. The companion "Matching Chart" provides guidance on the various wheel makes and components that can be safely interchanged. These charts are available to and should be used by all persons who service multipiece truck and bus wheels.

- more -

Individuals who service such wheels may obtain a single copy of each chart, without cost, by writing to the General Services Division/Distribution, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590.

Service establishments and other organizations desiring these charts may order them in any quantity desired from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office (GPO), Washington, D.C. 20402, at a cost established by the GPO. GPO ordering numbers for the charts are:

Safety Chart--------050-003-00315-8, Cost: $2.25
Matching Chart------050-003-00316-6, Cost: $2.00

Anyone experiencing problems with multipiece wheels should report them by writing to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Office of Defects Investigation, 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
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
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M-493

U.S. Department of Transportation

news:

Office of Public and Consumer Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, October 17, 1978

NHTSA -- 100-78 (Paris)
Tel. 202-426-9550

DOT DEFINES COURT
RULING ON BRAKE STANDARD

The U. S. Department of Transportation said today that most provisions of the federal standard that regulates the braking system performance of air-braked trucks, buses and trailers remain in effect.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issued a notice for publication in the Federal Register that outlines the government's interpretation of a court decision that holds portions of the federal standard to be invalid.

Federal Standard No. 121 has been in effect for trailers since Jan. 1, 1975, and for trucks and buses since March 1, 1975. The regulation requires that heavy vehicles equipped with air brakes, and traveling at 60 miles per hour, must be able to stop on a dry surface within 293 feet with no more than a momentary wheel lockup. The no-lockup requirement ensures that skidding and loss of lateral stability due to wheel lockup is minimized.

The NHTSA, reacting to a decision last April by the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and a recent denial by the U. S. Supreme Court to review that decision, said the standard remains in effect except for:

1. The no lockup requirement for trucks (including truck-tractors) and trailers, and,

2. The requirement that trucks (including tractors) be capable of stopping at 60 mph within 293 feet using normal brakes and 613 feet using backup emergency braking capability.

The NHTSA said the lower court decision has no effect on requirements for buses, and makes no changes in the braking characteristics of trucks and trailers, such as how well the brakes perform under sustained braking as measured in the laboratory on a test dynamometer.

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Office of Public and Consumer Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, October 20, 1978

NHTSA -- 99-78
Tel. 202-426-9550

NHTSA ISSUES
COMPLIANCE REPORT
FOR JULY 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 and Consumer Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

CONSUMER ADVISORY

FOR RELEASE 11:30 AM
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1978

NHTSA--102-78
Tel.202-426-9550

DOT, FIRESTONE AGREE
ON RADIAL TIRE RECALL

Some 10-million passenger car tires -- the largest number in history -- will be recalled by the Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. under an agreement announced today by Secretary of Transportation Brock Adams. It is estimated that 7 1/2 million of these tires are still in service.

Firestone estimates the recall may cost as much as $230 million.

Secretary Adams said that under the agreement the company will recall a large portion of its 1975 and 1976 production of Firestone 500 Steel Belted Radial tires and tires of similar construction made by Firestone for sale under other brand names, such as Montgomery Ward's Grappler 8000 and Shell Oil Co.'s Super Shell Steel Radials.

In addition, Firestone will recall a similar portion of its 1975 and 1976 TPC Steel Radial tires which were provided as original equipment on new General Motors cars.

The recalled tires will be replaced free of charge with Firestone 721 Steel Belted Radials, unless the purchaser requests to substitute another Firestone line.

The investigation and the settlement were conducted by DOT's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

- more -

Noting the high cost of the recall to Firestone, Adams said however, "the safety of the traveling public was our first concern."

"Before reaching a decision," he added, "we wanted to be absolutely certain of its necessity and the ability of the company to meet its responsibilities to its customers. I am satisfied on both counts."

NHTSA says it has information concerning 41 fatalities and 65 personal injuries allegedly resulting from failures of these tires.

The recall will include Steel Belted Radial 500 tires, similar private brand Firestone tires, and Firestone TPC tires if sold after Sept. 1, 1975 and before May 1, 1976. However, because records kept by Firestone and its dealers and by owners and purchasers may not be complete, Firestone will regard any such tires -- other than those sold as original equipment on new cars -- as coming within the recall, if they were manufactured March 1, 1975, or after.

Steel Belted Radial 500 tires made in the five-rib tread design will be included in the recall, if manufactured before Jan.1, 1977. Steel Belted Radial 500 tires made in the seven-rib tread design, and TPC radial tires will be included if manufactured before May 1, 1976.

Firestone also will issue a notification required by the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966, warning owners of 500 and TPC tires made prior to those covered by the recall that NHTSA has found their tires to be defective. Although it will not voluntarily recall the tires as the agency requested, the company says it will make consumer adjustment for 50% of the retail cost of a new 721 Steel Belted Radial for those tires made before the recall period.

The week and year of manufacturer is indicated in the last three digits of the DOT identification number appearing on either the outside or inside sidewall of each tire. The digit 385, for example, indicates the 38th week of 1975.

While the law requires records of all tire purchasers to be made and kept by tire dealers and manufacturer for three years, NHTSA is concerned that such record-keeping may be neither complete nor accurate Therefore, the agreement will require Firestone to give public notice to all consumers through its various advertising and marketing channels, including television, radio, and the print media.

(MORE)

The cutoff dates of May 1, 1976, and Jan. 1, 1977, for the tires being recalled are based on determinations by NHTSA's investigators that after those dates there was an improvement in the quality and performance of the Firestone 500 tires. This was apparently due to changes made in the internal construction of the tires.

In determining the scope of the recall, NHTSA examined many factors including:

- The record of adjustment rates for these tires over a period of years, as provided by Firestone.
- The date provided by other tire manufacturers on their comparable consumer adjustment rates.
- The significant changes in internal construction of the Firestone tires over a period of time.
- The differing patterns of failures evident between the various sizes of tires.
- The plants involved in the production of the Firestone tires.
- And, very importantly, matching all of this information against the individual complaints the agency received from consumers.

Claybrook, whose agency is responsible for vehicle and highway safety, and which conducted the investigation of the tires beginning in Feb. of this year said, "Personally, and on behalf of the department and the agency, I want to thank the many thousands of consumers who brought this problem to our attention by taking the time and trouble to call us and write us letters telling us of their experiences. It is their concern and their caring which is being recognized today in this recall. Within the statutory constraints imposed by our legislation, we are convinced that this agreement is the best for most consumers."

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, October 27, 1978

NHTSA -- 103-78 (Paris)
Tel. 202-426-9550

CONSUMER ADVISORY

DOT BALKS AT SERVICE STATIONS
CHARGING FOR AIR FOR TIRES

The head of the U. S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has urged the major oil companies to continue the practice of providing free pressurized air for tires at service stations throughout the nation.

In letters to the oil companies, NHTSA Administrator Joan Claybrook said she was very concerned that efforts appear to be under way that would discourage proper tire inflation. "I refer specifically to an apparent trend, particularly among self-service stations, to begin charging customers for the use of air. One device, for example, requires the insertion of 25 cents for four minutes of pressurized air," she wrote.

"Certainly, the small cost of this service, or the additional income that one may obtain by charging for pressurized air, cannot be sufficient to offset the potential degradation in safety or tire life that could result from charging for air to inflate tires."

In separate letters to the nation's major tire companies, Claybrook said she hopes the tire industry will actively resist these efforts, and asked for their views and suggestions on ways to improve the maintenance of tire inflation pressures in the nation's motor vehicle fleet.

She said the inflation pressure of tires must be maintained in order to achieve the safest and most economical performance.

Claybrook said she wanted to learn the extent to which the practice of charging for air has been adopted by oil company facilities and their contract retailers. She also asked the tire companies to communicate directly with the petroleum retailers in an effort to stop this practice from becoming widespread.

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CONSUMER ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, October 27, 1978

NHTSA — 104-78 (Paris)
Tel. 202-426-9550

1979 GAS MILEAGE GUIDE READY FOR NEW CAR BUYERS

Free copies of the first edition of the 1979 Gas Mileage Guide for New Car Buyers will be available to the public the first week in November, the Departments of Energy and Transportation announced today.

The pocket size guides contain basic information about new car, station wagon and light truck models and their estimated miles-per-gallon ratings. This information is in tabulated form so that consumers can make easy comparisons.

A major change in the 1979 guide is that it gives only one rating for estimated miles per gallon, instead of city, highway and combined mpg ratings used in the past. The new mpg ratings are equivalent to earlier city ratings. The change was made because studies showed that this rating is closer to what most people actually get in day-to-day driving situations.

The new guide also lists the estimated annual fuel costs for 1979 vehicles, as well as manufacturers' information on body style and size, engine size and type, number of cylinders or rotors and type of transmission and fuel systems.

There are two versions of the guide. One is for the 49 states other than California. The second is for California, where new car emissions standards are more stringent than the national standards.

There will be two editions of the guide in 1979. The first is dated September 1978 and reports new fuel economy figures for 1979 models certified as of Sept. 1, 1978. The second edition, to be published in early 1979, will contain data on 1979 model vehicles certified after Sept. 1.

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New car dealers are required by law to display the guides prominently in their showrooms and to keep an adequate stock on hand to meet public demand.

The gas mileage data on new cars are compiled by the Environmental Protection Agency and published and distributed by the Department of Energy. The Department of Transportation is authorized to penalize dealers who fail to display the guides in their showrooms.

Consumers who do not find the 1979 guides in a dealer's showroom should contact the Office of Enforcement, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590.

Single copies of the guide can be obtained from any new car dealer after the first week in November, or by writing to: Fuel Economy, Pueblo, Colo., 81009. Bulk copies can be requested from Fuel Economy Distribution, Office of Administrative Services, Department of Energy, Washington, D.C. 20545.

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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U. S. Department of Transportation
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, October 31, 1978

NHTSA -- 105-78 (Paris)
Tel. 202-426-9550

FAILURE TO SEE CYCLISTS MAJOR CAUSE OF ACCIDENTS

The failure of motorists to see motorcycles in traffic is the major cause of motorcycle accidents, according to preliminary findings of a study being conducted for the U. S. Department of Transportation.

An analysis of detailed data of 900 motorcycle accidents in the last 2 1/2 years in the Los Angeles area shows that 51 percent of the accidents were caused by motorists who said they either did not see the motorcyclist or did not see the rider until it was too late. A motor vehicle turning left into the path of a motorcycle was involved in 45 percent of all accidents.

The study is being carried out by the University of Southern California, under the direction of Harry Hurt, who is professor of safety at USC and a motorcyclist himself. The goal of the study is to determine the causes of motorcycle accidents, the causes of injuries, the severity of the injuries and effective methods of reducing accidents, deaths and injuries.

The collection of data dealing with the entire motorcycle population at the time and site of the accident locations involved in the study is still underway. The study is scheduled for completion next fall.

Figures released last June by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show that 4,082 motorcyclists were killed in traffic accidents in 1977. This represents a 23 percent increase over the number of cyclists killed in 1976.

Other key points in the preliminary findings show that motorcylists wearing protective helmets and involved in accidents received 23 percent fewer head injuries than unhelmeted cyclists. Of the 900 accident reports in the sample, there were 54 fatalities, and 85 percent of those victims were not wearing helmets.

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Interviews with motorcyclists involved in crashes showed that, in their opinion, helmets did not limit their hearing or vision in pre-crash conditions. Clinical evaluation showed that helmets are not responsible for neck or head injuries. An examination of the clinical data also shows the helmet to be the only effective life-saving device in use today.

NHTSA Administrator Joan Claybrook said the preliminary findings in the USC study supply fresh 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," Claybrook said. "In 15 states that repealed their helmet use laws since 1976, and that report whether cyclists involved in accidents were wearing helmets, the number of fatalities involving helmetless cyclists showed a dramatic increase of 88 percent from 1976 to 1977."

The Administrator said that two more studies on motorcycle helmets, conducted in the states of Oklahoma and Colorado, are now being completed and their findings will be announced in late November.

Claybrook also urged motorcyclists to wear yellow jackets or clothing so that they are more visible to motorists in traffic. "Researchers have found that high visibility clothing, particularly yellow, is an effective tool in reducing accident involvement," she said.

Other preliminary findings on motorcyclists involved in the USC study's 900 crashes show that:

- More than half of the drivers had less than six months experience with the particular motorcycle involved in the accident, although the overall motorcycle-riding experience of that group was over 3 years.

- About 92 percent had no professional or formal training; they were either self-taught or received instructions from friends, also self-taught.

- Cyclists have a great tendency to overbrake the rear wheel and underbrake the front wheel, greatly reducing their ability to take evasive maneuvers. Sixty-five percent of the accidents showed improper evasive action by cyclists.

- Alcohol consumption by the motorcycle driver is present in almost 12 percent of the accidents, but is involved in about 53 percent of fatal accidents.

-more-

- Age involvement includes a wide population range from 8 to 82, but over 50 percent are between the ages of 16 and 23.

- Forty-one percent of the accidents are caused by motorcyclist error in judgment or in man/machine relationship. Vehicle failures account for only about 3 percent of the accidents. About 10 percent of the cycles had tires in poor condition.

- Approximately 12 percent of the cyclists either had no license or were riding with a revoked license.

- Sixty percent were not wearing helmets at the time of accident. Of this group, 38 percent said they did not wear helmets because they did not expect to be involved in accidents; 26 percent said helmets were inconvenient and 15 percent said they did not have a helmet with them. Helmet usage is not required in California.

- Female operators are overrepresented -- 3.8 percent -- in the accident sample, as they constitute 2 percent of the cycle population.

- Fuel system leakage was present in about 62 percent of the motorcycles during the post-crash phase.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, November 1, 1978

NHTSA -- 106-78 (Cook)
Tel. 202-426-9550

INVESTIGATION SHOWS INATTENTION CAUSED FATAL PINTO-VAN CRASH

Seconds of inattention by a van driver caused a rear end crash into a 1973 Pinto and the fiery deaths of three young girls in an August 10 traffic accident at Goshen, Ind., the U. S. Department of Transportation said today.

Accident investigators for the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration cited this inattention as a definite cause of the accident, with the absence of roadway shoulders to allow off-road emergency stopping as a probable contributing cause.

NHTSA engineers conclude that while the crash was a severe one, it represents another example of a Pinto crash and fire which has resulted in a recall of all 1971-1976 Pintos except station wagons. The filler pipe was pulled out of the tank, and the fuel tank was penetrated by parts of the Pinto's understructure. These are considered typical of the Pinto fuel tank problem.

Reconstructing the accident situation, the investigators determined that the Pinto was driving north in the right curb lane of U. S. Route 33 about 6:20 p.m. with the four-way flasher light system operating. The vehicle began slowing down as the driver prepared to pull to the right. There was no safe place for emergency parking, investigators said. A statement taken from the 18-year-old driver, just before she died, indicates she was in the process of pulling over to check a gasoline odor problem.

A 1972 Chevrolet van was approaching from the rear at an estimated speed of 50 miles-per-hour. The 21-year-old male driver of the van, who was "just out driving," said he saw the flasher lights of the Pinto ahead and assumed the vehicle was moving at his own speed. He looked down for a package of cigarettes, and as he looked up saw the Pinto just in front of him. There was no evidence of pre-impact maneuver or braking by the van, following this momentary lapse of attention.

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The van, with a gross weight of 4,065 pounds, struck the 2,602 pound Pinto rupturing the fuel tank and propelling the smaller vehicle 168 feet as the gasoline ignited. The van came to rest about 131 feet from the point of impact.

Engineering analysis of the accident evidence shows that the pre-crash velocity difference between the two vehicles was estimated to have been 33 to 40 miles per hour, NHTSA said. The van, with a higher road clearance, overrode the Pinto's rear, forcing the fuel tank into the differential housing, separating the filler neck from the tank, and dislodging the vent plug on the top of the tank. A large gash, approximately 5 to 7 inches long, was found in the left rear section of the tank just above the midsection seam.

Gasoline entered the passenger compartment when the tank penetrated the sheet metal separating the back seat from the trunk. The driver's window was shut and the passenger window was open, creating an air flow pattern that may have aided the forward stream of gasoline to vent into the passenger compartment.

Approximately eight minutes elapsed before rescue teams arrived at the scene to extinguish the flames. Both female passengers age 16 and 18, were pronounced dead on the scene, while the driver died eight hours later at the hospital from severe burns.

The driver of the van was treated for broken ribs, multiple contusions, and a lacerated knee, and was released.

The investigators concluded that the post-crash fire caused the fatal injuries to the Pinto's driver and probably the passengers, while the van driver's failure to use the available seat belt caused his chest injuries.

They urged that highways should be designed to provide adequate shoulder areas for emergency use to avert the danger of similar accidents.

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CONSUMER ADVISORY
REQUEST FOR
PUBLIC COMMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, November 7, 1978

NHTSA -107-78 (PARIS)
Tel. 202-426-9550

DOT PROPOSES STANDARDS
FOR BETTER DRIVER VISION

The U.S. Department of Transportation today proposed new standards designed to improve a vehicle driver's field of vision.

DOT's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration proposes a new federal standard to provide drivers with an improved direct field of view of their motoring environment. NHTSA's second proposal would amend a current standard -- No. 111 Rearview Mirrors -- to provide drivers with an increased rearward field of view.

The proposal for a new standard would reduce impairment of the driver's field of direct view from physical obstructions caused by vehicle design, low light transmittance through glazed surfaces, poor sun visor and shade band designs, and inadequate windshield viewing areas. The new rule would set minimum standards of performance to ensure that vehicle designs provide the driver with an adequate field of direct view.

The proposed standard, which would apply to passenger cars, trucks, multipurpose vehicles and buses, also would set requirements to make it easier for bus drivers to see pedestrians.

In its second notice, the NHTSA said it is proposing to upgrade the existing standard on rearview mirrors so that less head and eye movement is needed by the motorist to view the road to the rear and sides of the vehicle.

-more-

The proposed amendment would upgrade the mirror systems on all motor vehicles -- cars, trucks, buses, motorcycles, and multipurpose passenger vehicles -- by reducing blind spots, by requiring mirrors to have breakaway characteristics for the protection of pedestrians and cyclists, and by requiring inside mirrors to be shatter resistant.

The proposed effective date for both standards is Sept. 1, 1981, and comments from interested parties should be submitted to NHTSA, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590, on or before March 6, 1979.

NHTSA Administrator Joan Claybrook said many serious and often fatal accidents are the result of obstructed vision, which may cause the motorist to collide with a pedestrian, a stationary object, or another vehicle. "We believe the actions we are taking today will lead to requirements that should considerably reduce the possibility of such accidents."

The NHTSA invites all qualified individuals and organizations financially unable to participate in these rulemaking proceedings to apply for financial assistance. All applications for such assistance should be submitted prior to Dec. 4, 1978, to Ms. Jeannette Feldman, Public Affairs and Consumer Participation, NHTSA, Room 5232, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590.

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CONSUMER ADVISORY
Request for Public Comment

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, November 28, 1978

NHTSA -- 109-78 (Cook)
Tel. 202-426-9550

DOT TO UPGRADE SAFETY STANDARDS
FOR LIGHT TRUCKS AND VANS

Drivers and passengers in light trucks and vans will be as well protected in accidents as the occupants of automobiles under a series of proposed amendments to federal motor vehicle safety standards announced today by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Proposed changes in the standards reflect the concern of the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) over the increasing fatality rate among occupants of such vehicles.

The number of vehicles such as pickup trucks, buses and vans in operation have increased by about 80 percent over the last decade and now account for 89 percent of the truck market. By comparison, the number of passenger cars on the road has increased 32 percent during this period.

Sales of these vehicles, half of which are pickup trucks, reached a record 3.4 million units last year, NHTSA said. Ford Motor Co. produced more than 1.1 million of the total, and General Motors 1.4 million. Total light truck, van and multi-purpose vehicle registrations now exceed 26 million and can be expected to double by 1990, the federal safety agency added.

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

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

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

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

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

All light trucks, buses and multi-purpose vehicles would be required to comply with standards 201, 203, and 204. In addition, each vehicle would have to be equipped with a lap and shoulder belt for the front passenger window seating position.

The effective date for the extension of all three standards is Sept. 1, 1980, with the exception of forward control vehicles (those with engines that extend more than one half their length behind the windshield), which must comply with standards 203 and 204 by Sept. 1, 1981.

Comments on the proposed changes should be received on or before February 7, 1979. They should be addressed to: Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5108, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20590.

The NHTSA invites all qualified invididuals and organizations financially unable to participate in these rulemaking proceedings to apply for financial assistance. All applications for such assistance should be submitted prior to Dec. 11, 1978, to Jeannette Feldman, Public Affairs and Consumer Participation, NHTSA, Room 5232, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590.

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CONSUMER ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, November 29, 1978

NHTSA --110-78 (BOAZ)
Tel. 202-426-9550

FINAL SETTLEMENT IN
FIRESTONE 500 RECALL

A final agreement ironing out details of the recall of Firestone 500 Steel Belted Radial tires has been signed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Firestone Tire and Rubber Co.

The negotiation of several unresolved issues has been continuing between the company and NHTSA since the massive recall of some 7.5-million tires estimated to be in service was announced under an "Agreement in Principle" on Oct. 20. NHTSA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

NHTSA Administrator Joan Claybrook said the purpose of the agreement is to assure that Firestone will carry out the recall campaign "as expeditiously as possible. In view of the delay in signing the document, it is hoped that the company and its dealers will take extraordinary measures to assist Firestone tire owners who are presently filing numerous complaints with the agency. The major purpose of this recall is to get these defective tires off the road," she said.

The final agreement reaffirms the scope of the recall previously agreed to, and clarifies several issues and questions which have arisen concerning specific details of how the recall is to be carried out. To further promote full understanding of the massive recall campaign on the part of consumers, as well as Firestone dealers who must implement its terms, the safety agency and Firestone will issue agreed upon instructions to Firestone dealers and a booklet describing the recall to be distributed to consumers at dealer's showrooms.

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Under the agreement, the company will recall and replace free of charge:

(1) All 5-rib 500 Steel Belted Radials (including private brands of the same internal construction) manufactured in the U.S. or Canada and sold on or after Sept. 1, 1975 provided they were manufactured prior to Jan. 1, 1977. Tires in this group have DOT identification numbers indicating the 35th through 52nd weeks of 1975 (355 through 525), and all weeks of 1976 (016 through 526). These final three digits of the number molded into the tire sidewall after the symbol DOT represent the tire's week and year of manufacture. The final digit is the same as that of the year, and the two digits preceding it indicate the week of that year.

(2) All 7-rib 500 Steel Belted Radials (including private brands of the same internal construction) and Firestone TPC tires manufactured in the U.S. or Canada and sold on or after Sept. 1, 1975, and manufactured prior to May 1, 1976. Tires in this group have DOT identification numbers ending in 355 through 525 and 016 through 176. Firestone TPC tires are sold as original equipment on General Motors cars.

(3) All 5-rib and 7-rib Steel Radial 500's and TPC tires manufactured prior to Sept. 1, 1975, which owners can prove were purchased after that date. All Firestone 500 Steel Belted Radials and private brands of the same construction shall be considered "sold" after Sept. 1, 1975, and eligible for free replacement, if the tires bear DOT numbers indicating manufacture on or after March 1, 1975, provided that the tires are not mounted on 1975 model vehicles. Tires mounted on 1975 model vehicles are included if they were made after Sept. 1, 1975 or if there is proof of purchase of the tires or vehicle after that date.

The agency and Firestone agreed to include replacement tires manufactured after March 1, 1975, for which the company generally does not have records of ownership, because they are very likely to have been purchased after Sept. 1, 1975, the statutory cut off date for coverage under the Federal Traffic Safety Act. Nearly all owners of original equipment tires, including Firestone TPC tires, are expected to receive notification letters from Firestone. Tires manufactured between March 1 and Sept. 1, 1975 and mounted on 1975 model cars are covered by the recall if the owner has a recall letter or other proof of the date of purchase.

Consumers are alerted to the fact that they have 60 days after receipt of their notification letter to present their letter to their Firestone dealer.

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While possession of tires is sufficient evidence of ownership in many cases under the recall, customers having tires sold after Sept. 1, 1975 but manufactured before March 1, 1975 will be required to show other proof of purchase.

Proof of purchase, if required, in the case of replacement tires, will be either the purchaser's or owner's recall notification letter from Firestone, or the new tire invoice, or other evidence of purchase, along with the tires being recalled. In the case of original equipment tires, proof of purchase, if required, will be the purchaser's or owner's recall notification letter, new vehicle invoice or title, or other evidence of vehicle purchase date, and the recalled tires.

Tires which are worn out will be replaced unless they are not mounted on vehicles, and if the individual presenting them for replacement can offer proof that he is the actual owner of the vehicle (or his authorized agent) on which such tires are being used. Worn out tires are defined by NHTSA standards as those with less than 2/32nd of an inch of tread remaining, measured at several points on the tire.

Tire owners are defined as those persons presenting tires for replacement who are either the first purchasers of the tires and still have possession of them, or persons who are currently using the tires on their vehicles, or have used them and still have possession of them.

Although the replacement of recalled tires shall be made with new Firestone 721 Steel Belted Radials, the owner-purchaser will have his choice from among comparable tires which may be available, or may elect to wait for that choice to become available. If he so chooses, the owner may select a lower priced, non-comparable, non-radial tire as a replacement, but will be required to sign a document indicating he is satisfied that the company has met its obligation.

Firestone will be responsible for the recall of private brand tires produced by the company which are subject to this recall, and may, if the private brand marketers agree, implement the recall through the facilities of the private brand marketers.

Private brands included in the recall are:

Wards Grappler II Steel Radial	Wards Grappler Steel Radial
Shell Steel Radial	K Mart Radial 40
National Steel Radial	Union Steel Radial
Seiberling RT 78 Steel Belt Radial	Zenith Supreme Steel Belt Radial
Holiday Supreme Steel Belt Radial	JTW Ferrari Supreme Steel Radial
LeMans Steel Belted Radial	JTW Ferrari Steel Radial
Atlas Goldenaire II	
Caravelle Supreme & Caravelle Double Steel Radial	

It should be noted that some of the private brand tires indicated above may have been manufactured by a number of different rubber companies. The recall would, of course, apply only to those tires manufactured by the Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. and are subject to the same sales and manufacturing dates as the Firestone 500 tires being recalled.

Arrangements for the formal recall are now underway, and some owners will receive notification letters by the end of December. The company agrees to use its best efforts, including employment of overtime and other feasible methods to accelerate production and distribution of replacement tires as soon as possible. Firestone says it will devote a production of some 400,000 plus tires per month entirely to the recall effort.

Firestone has also agreed to offer an exchange of new tires at half price for some 6-million Steel Belted Radial 500's, similar private brands, and Firestone TPC tires sold prior to the Sept. 1, 1975 statutory recall cut off date, and not covered by the recall. The agency had urged Firestone to recall these tires even though the statute requires only notification, but the company would offer only the adjustment arrangement.

In an effort to assure notification of all consumers whose tires are subject to recall or exchange, Firestone will undertake a nationwide media campaign to inform them of the agency's defect finding and explain the recall and exchange procedures to be followed. The media campaign will include placement of 1,000 line advertisements in the Sunday editions of 242 major daily newspapers in the top 200 markets in the country.

These advertisements will appear in print as soon as production will permit, and will be run simultaneously insofar as possible. Availability of replacement tires in specific geographic markets and ad placement procedures may alter this schedule to some degree.

Firestone will supplement the newspaper advertising program by using the services of a news release syndication group which will process a detailed news release to 3,800 daily and weekly newspapers nationwide.

Firestone will also prepare 30-second TV messages with company Chairman Richard A. Riley or other appropriate company spokesmen, announcing the recall and referring consumers to the print media for details. The TV messages will be shown at least once on two major networks at times normally used by the company in its national tire advertising.

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Under the agreement, NHTSA will have the right to review the print and TV advertising copy and the recall letters to consumers.

Although not part of the agreement, Firestone will offer refunds to those consumers who have received an adjustment for failed tires during the period from Sept. 1, 1975 until the date of this agreement Nov. 29, that would otherwise have been subject to recall and free replacement. Those applying for such a refund should obtain a form from their dealer for making application directly to the company.

Both parties recognize that in a recall of this scope, duration, and complexity, some misinformation and complaints will occur. NHTSA agrees to forward to the company's Consumer Affairs Department any complaints received concerning the recall, and the company will endeavor to investigate and satisfy the complaints promptly. Complaints may also be forwarded directly to the company at the following address:

Mr. J. B. Scarcliff
Consumer Affairs Department
The Firestone Tire and Rubber Co.
1200 Firestone Parkway
Akron, Ohio 44317

NHTSA said that if consumers are unable to obtain satisfaction after contacting the company, they may seek assistance by writing to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590

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Office of Public and Consumer Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590

CONSUMER ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, December 5, 1978

NHTSA -- 111-78 (Chor)
Tel.No. (202) 426-0670

POTENTIAL STEERING DEFECT IN FORD TRUCKS INVESTIGATED

A suspected safety defect in the steering systems of Ford light trucks and vans produced from 1974 through 1977 is being investigated by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The investigation is being conducted by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and centers on Ford E series Econoline vans and F series light trucks which may suffer steering loss when the steering gear box separates from the frame.

The agency estimates there are 1.3 million of these trucks in use. It has received 26 reports of steering failures, including two alleged accidents and two alleged injuries.

The steering gear box enables the front wheels to turn in response to motion of the steering wheel. If the box separates from the frame, steering is lost. Although the problem may be preceded by looseness in steering response, steering loss may occur with no warning.

Anyone experiencing this problem is urged to report it by letter to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Office of Defect Investigations, Washington, D.C. 20590 or by calling the agency's toll-free auto safety hotline 800-424-9393 (Washington, D.C. metro area 426-0123).

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CONSUMER ADVISORY

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
December 15, 1978

NHTSA --114--78 (Paris)
Tel. 202-426-9550

NEW DOT STUDY FINDS
ONLY 14% OF DRIVERS
USE AUTO SAFETY BELTS

Only 14 percent of the nation's drivers use their safety belts, according to a new survey conducted for the U. S. Department of Transportation.

A separate study evaluating the comfort and convenience of safety belts in 1979 model cars uncovered a number of problems associated with using these new belt systems.

The findings of both research studies were disclosed today at a public meeting at the department's headquarters building in Washington, D. C. The two studies were sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The survey assessing safety belt usage was conducted by Opinion Research Corp. of Princeton, N. J., and sampled almost 70,000 drivers who were observed in 19 metropolitan areas across the country from November 1977 through June 1978.

The study evaluating current safety belt systems was designed to increase public awareness of the differences among the various belt systems. Earlier surveys have shown that up to 50 percent of those people who do not wear belts give comfort and convenience problems as the reason.

NHTSA Administrator Joan Claybrook said, "The most important safety measure that individual motorists can take is to fasten their safety belts every time they get into a car. We are very concerned that all possible steps be taken to increase belt usage."

" Since the most common reasons people give for not wearing their belts are discomfort and inconvenience," she said, "we decided to assess those factors in current model cars. This new study indeed confirms that comfort and convenience are causes for concern. We hope that individual auto companies will do similar studies to see what can be done to resolve these problems."

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The survey showed that usage in 1974-1978 cars equipped with lap and shoulder combination systems was 14% (12.6% for both belts and 1.4% for the lap portion alone). In vehicles equipped with separate lap and shoulder belts (1968-1973 models), belt usage was 3.3% for both, and 13.7% for lap belts only. In those vehicles equipped with only lap belts (1964-1967), the belts were worn by 11% of the drivers. In cars equipped with passive belt systems (the Volkswagen Rabbit), usage was 78%.

Observations are continuing of belt usage by drivers stopped for signals at traffic intersections in Atlanta, Baltimore, Birmingham, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Fargo, N. D. - Morehead, Minn., Houston, Los Angeles, Minneapolis - St. Paul, New York City, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Miami, New Orleans and Providence.

Highlights of this study show the following patterns of belt usage:

- For 1976-1978 models, usage in subcompact cars was 19.5%; for compact cars usage was 12.5%; in intermediate cars it was 10.3%; and in full sized cars it was 9.6%.
- Substantially more drivers in the west (18.3%) use belts than in other parts of the country (11.4%).
- Significantly more women drivers (16.4%) use belts than men (12.6%).
- Usage levels were highest (17%) in cars equipped with continuous light-buzzer reminders and starter interlocks (1972-1974 models).
- Usage in 1976-1978 cars was about 13.5%, indicating that the eight-second light and buzzer system reminder in these cars had little effect on belt usage.

The comfort and convenience evaluation of current belt systems was conducted over a 4-day period last September by Verve Research Corp. of Rockville, Md., and involved 114 evaluators selected from among licensed drivers in the metropolitan area of Detroit. The 30 cars selected (19 domestic and 11 foreign) represent about 80 percent of the expected auto sales volume in the U. S. during 1979.

During the evaluation trials in each car, all participants were asked a series of questions concerning comfort and convenience.

The study showed that the most common problems were associated with: (1) comfort of the belt during upper torso movement (as when looking back toward the right prior to changing lanes); (2) pressure of the belt on the occupant; (3) proper fit of the belt; and (4) finding the latch plate and extending it over to the buckle in order to fasten it.

Other significant problems were observed during the trials. In about one of five trials, the shoulder belt became twisted. In about 10% of the trials in cars equipped with "window-shade" tension relievers, (devices designed to remove belt pressure on the shoulders and chest) excessive shoulder belt slack occurred. Such slack reduces the protection afforded to the wearer. On over 20% of the trials, incomplete retraction of the belt was observed after the belt was unbuckled.

The 30 cars shown in Table 1 were compared to each other based on the percentage of trials in which a moderate or serious problem was reported by the person using the belt. This percentage ranged from about 35% to 85%. This means that, even in the car judged to be the "best" of all those evaluated, 35% of the test subjects report a moderate or serious problem associated with some aspect of safety belt comfort or convenience.

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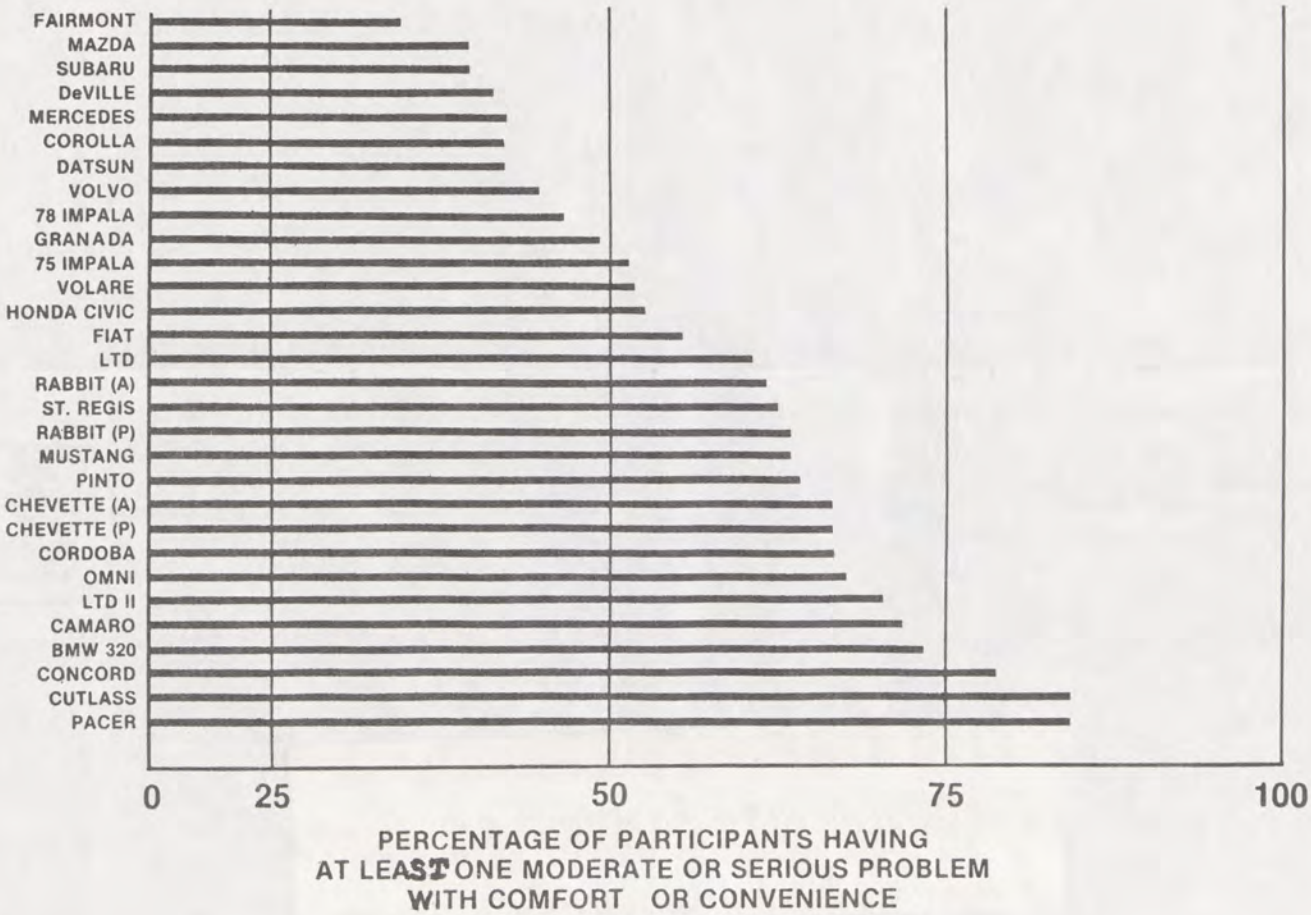
RANKING OF CARS



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Office of Public and Consumer Affairs

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CONSUMER ADVISORY
Request for Public Comment

FOR RELEASE MONDAY
December 18, 1978

NHTSA 115-78 (Paris)
Tel. 202-426-9550

NHTSA CONSIDERS BID TO LOWER
TRUCK FUEL-ECONOMY STANDARD

The U. S. Department of Transportation has invited public comment on a petition by Chrysler Corp. asking for a reduction in the average fuel economy standards for 1981 model year light trucks.

Last March, the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced standards for 1980 and 1981 light trucks (pickup trucks and vans) with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) up to 8,500 pounds.

The standards set average fuel economy levels for 1980 model trucks at 16.0 miles per gallon for two-wheel drive vehicles and 14.0 mpg for four-wheel drive light trucks. The required levels for model year 1981 vehicles were set at 18.0 and 15.5 mpg for two and four-wheel drive light trucks, respectively.

In issuing the standards, NHTSA said the levels were determined in accordance with the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to be the maximum feasible average fuel economy levels, considering technological feasibility, economic practicability, the effects of all applicable federal motor vehicle standards, and the need of the nation to conserve energy.

On Sept. 20, 1978, Chrysler requested that the 1981 fuel economy standard be reduced to 16.5 and 14.5 mpg for two and four-wheel drive light trucks, respectively.

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Although Chrysler did not challenge the final rule when it was issued in March 1978, it now claims that in the absence of a reduction in the standards, it is faced with either closing down some of its truck plants and limiting the sale of the company's less fuel efficient trucks, or violating the law.

A reduction in the standards to the leve s requested by Chrysler would result in the consumption of approximately 2.5 billion extra gallons of gasoline over the life of the 1981 light truck fleet.

Since the standards generally are applicable to all light truck manufacturers, granting Chrysler's request would lower the standards for all manufacturers.

NHTSA is seeking public comment to assist it in reaching a final decision on the 1981 standards.

NHTSA also invites individuals or organizations who wish to participate in the proceeding, but are financially unable to do so, to apply for financial assistance. Such applications should be submitted to Ms. Jeannette Feldman, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5232, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20590. Applications must be submitted by Dec. 28, 1978.

Written comments on Chrysler's petition must be submitted by Jan. 17, 1979.

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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY
December 27, 1978

NHTSA 116-78 (Ames)
Tel.No. (202) 426-0670

DEFECT INVESTIGATORY CASES REPORT

FOR MAY -- SEPTEMBER 1978

During this reporting period, five new safety-related defect investigations were opened and 22 were terminated. At the end of the reporting period, 58 safety-related defect investigations were in progress, including four placed in the "suspended" category, three which are in litigation, and three in which an initial defect determination has been made.

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 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, D.C. 20590.

Cases listed as suspended will be carried in this category for two months, after which they will be terminated unless new evidence is received which justifies continued investigation.

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Reporting Period: May -- September, 1978

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 does, 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 (as amended). The NHTSA objectives are to discover whether alleged problems do occur, the cause of such problems, and whether the problems result in accidents, property damage, fatalities, 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).

June 1978:

Case Number: C8-27
Manufacturer: Ford Motor Company
Make: Ford-Mercury
Model: Granada - Monarch
Year(s): 1975-1977

SUBJECT: Alleged underhood fires in 1975-1977 Granada and Monarch vehicles manufactured by Ford Motor Company.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

A case was initiated on June 1, 1978, based upon receipt of 11 reports of underhood fires in 1975-1977 Granada and Monarch vehicles manufactured by Ford Motor Company. This included one complaint forwarded to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) by the Center for Auto Safety. The NHTSA has received no reports of accidents and two reports of injuries relating to the allegations

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

The problem appears to center on the short piece of flexible hose and two clamps used to secure the metal fuel line from the fuel pump to the inlet end of the metal fuel filter threaded into the carburetor.

ANALYSIS OF THE ALLEGED PROBLEM:

Problem Mode: The reports of fires include indications of leakage and disconnection of the hose from the metal pipe and/or filter assembly as well as some indications of cracking and splitting of the hose. While the design calls for the pipe and filter to be in direct abutment, some reports indicate the existence of tension in the flexible hose due to misalignment or springing of the metal pipe.

Problem Symptoms: Fires under the hood have been reported both with and without prior warning to the operator. Prior warning in the form of raw fuel odors has been reported.

Case Number: C8-28
Manufacturer: Fiat Motors
Make: Fiat
Model: 128-X-1/9 Model Vehicles
Year(s): 1973-1977

SUBJECT: Alleged front-wheel hub bearing failure on 1973-1977 Fiat 128 and X-1/9 model vehicles.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

This case was opened June 1, 1978, based on 12 consumer complaints alleging failure of the front wheel hub bearings on 1973-1977 Fiat 128 and X-1/9 model vehicles.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

The front wheel hub double row angular contact ball-bearing is used in the independent front suspension on the X-1/9 model and in the knuckle pillar in the 128 model front drive independent suspension. The wheel hub and knuckle pillar support the wheel assembly and the bearing permits rotation of the wheel with a minimum of friction. The bearing has two rows of balls, split inner races, nylon cages, built-in seals and one outer race with two angular grooves for the two rows of balls. The bearing is lubricated and sealed for life.

ANALYSIS OF THE ALLEGED PROBLEM:

Problem Mode: The alleged causes of the front wheel bearing failures are spalling or pitting of the raceway from fatigue, water or dust infiltration past the seal, or axial play in the bearing spindle. Continued driving can produce spalling of both raceways and balls and evidence of overheating.

Problem Symptoms: The indication of malfunction begins with noise from the bearings which slowly increases in intensity as further deterioration occurs.

Case Number: C8-29
Manufacturer: Ford Motor Company
Make: Ford/Mercury
Model: Pinto-Mustang II-Bobcat
Year(s) 1973-1975

SUBJECT: Alleged failure of steering coupling flange (steering column-to-steering gear shift) 1973-1975 Pinto, Mustang II, and Mercury Bobcat.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

On January 21, 1978, Mr. Martin C. Erwin petitioned the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to determine if a steering failure in his 1975 Mustang II constituted a safety defect which could result in a recall campaign. The petition alleges that 1975 Mustang II vehicles have inadequate clamping of the steering coupling flange onto the manual steering gear input shaft which results in complete loss of steering and can thereby cause an accident. Certain 1974 Mustang II and Pinto vehicles have been recalled to correct the same problem by the Ford Motor Company. The recall was based on a study which compared results of malfunctions with the date of manufacture of the vehicle. The NHTSA objectives are to discover whether other Ford vehicles using identical parts involved in the problem are experiencing similar failures.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

The subject Ford vehicles are equipped with a steering coupling flange clamped on the manual steering gear input shaft.

ANALYSIS OF THE ALLEGED PROBLEM:

Problem Mode: Allegedly, the steering coupling flange is not securely clamped on the steering gear input shaft.

Problem Symptoms: Insecure clamping to the shaft can cause wear and progressive looseness. This looseness, if either undetected or not promptly repaired, could progress until slippage between the flange and shaft occurs and eventually wears or strips the internal spline teeth of the flange. Failure of this connection causes loss of steering control.

July 1978:

Case Number: C8-33
Manufacturer: General Motors Corporation
Make: Buick-Oldsmobile-Pontiac
Model: V6-231 Engine
Year(s): 1977

SUBJECT: Alleged engine stalling on 1977 Pontiac, Buick, and Oldsmobile vehicles equipped with the 231 CID V-6 engine manufactured by General Motors Corporation (GM).

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

This case was opened on July 21, 1978, based on consumer complaints alleging that the subject vehicles stalled excessively in traffic when the engine or air temperatures were low. It was further alleged that this condition had resulted in vehicle accidents.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

The problem alleged is vehicle stalling when accelerating from a stop or low speeds. Stalling conditions seem to be most pronounced when the temperature of the engine and/or air is low.

The performance of the carburetor and ignition system on the subject V-6 engine was intended by GM to meet or exceed the current Federal anti-pollution standards while providing satisfactory engine response under all operating conditions.

ANALYSIS OF THE ALLEGED PROBLEM:

Problem Mode: A review of owners' descriptions and General Motors service bulletins suggests that during engine warm-up ordinary throttle applications result in excessive leaning of an already lean mixture and consequent engine stalling.

Problem Symptom: The vehicles allegedly stall frequently when the engines are cold when accelerating from a stop or from low speeds. The problem is accentuated when ambient temperatures are low.

September 1978

Case Number: C8-39
Manufacturer: Volkswagen of North America, Inc.
Make: Porsche
Model: 911
Year(s): 1977

SUBJECT: Alleged engine compartment fires in 1977 Porsche 914 model vehicles imported by Volkswagen of America.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

This case was opened on September 8, 1978, based on consumer complaints alleging that certain 1977 Porsche 911 Model vehicles were experiencing sudden and unexplained engine compartment fires. It was further alleged that this condition occurred while the vehicle was in motion and could result in loss of vehicle control.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION:

These vehicles are all equipped with fuel injection systems which operate with higher fuel pressures than vehicles equipped with carburetors. Leaked fuel, under the higher pressures, is more likely to issue in the form of a "mist" which is readily ignitable. The subject vehicle can also be equipped with an air conditioning unit, whose engine compartment components consist of a compressor, hoses, and air-ducts. The ducts have in the past been alleged to ignite from excessive engine compartment heat.

ANALYSIS OF THE ALLEGED PROBLEM:

A review of owners' descriptions of the alleged fires suggests that the source of the fires may be in the air conditioner air-duct tubes. These tubes have previously been the subject of recall action by Porsche. However, fires have apparently occurred in vehicles having the improved hoses installed as a fix during the recall. It now appears that a duct tube fire burns through adjacent flexible fuel lines allowing gasoline under pressure to mist into the engine compartment increasing the intensity and scope of the fire.

Problem Symptom: Some owners have reported a "burning" smell in the vehicle prior to discovery of visible fire, although most owners alleged that they received no prior warning of fire.

SAFETY RELATED DEFECT INVESTIGATORY CASES
APPROVED FOR SUSPENSION THIS REPORTING PERIOD

(Note: Special attention is directed to the suspended investigatory cases listed below, so that persons with experience or information they consider vital to these investigations may report the matter in detail to the NHTSA.

These cases have been suspended in accordance with the Department of Transportation, NHTSA, Defects Investigation Policy published in the Federal Register, October 12, 1973.

Cases will be terminated in two months unless new evidence is received which justifies continued investigation).

Case Number: C5-01
Manufacturer: General Motors Corporation
Make: Chevrolet
Model: Corvette
Year(s): 1963-1974

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged failure of rear wheel bearings on 1963-1974 Chevrolet Corvettes manufactured by General Motors Corporation allowing wheels to bind up or lock.

Case Number: C4-59
Manufacturer: Volkswagen of America
Make: Porsche-Audi
Model: Porsche 911T-914-Audi 100LS
Year(s): 1970-1972

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged leaking fuel injectors on certain Volkswagen automobiles manufactured by Volksagenwerke AB could result in engine compartment fires.

Case Number: C5-07
Manufacturer: General Motors Corporation
Make: Pontiac
Model: All V8 equipped engines
Year(s): 1966-1972

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged failure of the Pontiac V-8 timing gear resulting in loss of engine power in traffic.

Case Number: C4-29
Manufacturer: Ford Motor Company
Make: Ford
Model: All with 4-barrel carburetor
Year(s): 1968-1973

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged failure of fast idle cam, causing jamming of throttle in open position and loss of control of vehicle speed.

SAFETY-RELATED DEFECT INVESTIGATION CASES
TERMINATED THIS REPORTING PERIOD

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

May 1978:

Case Number: C2-60
Manufacturer: Volkswagen of North America, Inc.
Make: Volkswagen
Model: All
Year(s): Pre-1963

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged engine fume intrusion through the heater system into the passenger compartment of 1949-1972 Types I and II Volkswagen vehicles affects driver's control of vehicle.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: Investigation disclosed that the distribution of carbon monoxide (CO) levels in test vehicles was skewed toward low concentration and that vehicles with high CO levels showed exhaust system/engine sealing deterioration. This fact, combined with the small number of consumer complaints and the vintage of vehicles involved are reasons for termination.

Case Number: C3-34
Manufacturer: General Motors Corporation
Make: Chevrolet
Model: Series 10 truck
Year(s): 1966-1971

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged rear axle control arm failure on GM 1966-1971 light duty trucks could affect vehicle control.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: Reported failures appeared to be caused by operating vehicles under severe conditions. No failure trend in injury or property damage accidents or other safety related problems were demonstrated in the past by failure of the rear axle control arms on trucks in normal operation.

Case Number: C4-11
Manufacturer: Action Industries, Incorporated
Make: Swinger
Model: 25-Foot Motorhome
Year(s): 1970-1971

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged unsatisfactory performance of the front suspension components on the 1971, 24 and 25-foot Swinger Motorhomes manufactured by Action Industries, Inc. resulting in

vehicle overloading or suspension system failure.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: "A virtual total absence of consumer complaints or failure reports on these vehicles seems to indicate that there is a reserve capacity of individual components above their rated values."

Case Number: C4-13
Manufacturer: Bendix Home Systems, Incorporated
Make: Bendix
Model: Lifetime Premier 23' Motorhome
Year(s): 1969-1971

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged front-end suspension overload on 1969-1971 Lifetime Premier 23-foot motorhomes manufactured by Boise Cascade, Recreational Vehicle Division, resulting in failure of suspension system components.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: "A virtual total absence of consumer complaints or failure reports on these vehicles seems to indicate that there is a reserve capacity of individual components above their rated values."

Case Number: C4-14
Manufacturer: PRF Industries
Make: Travco
Model: 220 Motorhome
Year(s): 1970

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged front-end suspension overload on the 1970 Travco 22-foot Motorhome manufactured by PRF Industries, resulting in failure of suspension system components.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: "A virtual total absence of consumer complaints or failure reports on these vehicles seems to indicate that there is a reserve capacity of individual components above their rated values."

Case Number: C4-26
Manufacturer: General Motors Corporation
Make: Cadillac
Model: All
Year(s): 1967-1973

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged Saginaw power steering gear problems in 1967-1973 passenger cars manufactured by General Motors Corp., Ford Motor Co., American Motors Corp., Rolls-Royce Motors, Inc., Checker Motors Corp., and Excalibur Automotive Corp. Alleged problems such as steering lock-up and self-steering could result in loss of vehicle control.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: No trend of lock-up, binding or self-steering or of injuries, property damage accidents or other safety-related problems has been demonstrated in the past by the subject steering gear spool valves in the Saginaw power steering gear assemblies.

Case Number: C4-34
Manufacturer: Nissan Motors of USA
Make: Datsun
Model: 510-1200
Year(s): 1969-1971

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged filler hose and three-way connector leaks on 1969-1971 Datsun 510 and 1971 Datsun 1200 automobiles manufactured by the Nissan Motor Corp., which could result in loss of fuel and possibility of fire.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: No failures reported to NHTSA and no fires, accidents, or injuries reported to NHTSA or the manufacturer (Nissan).

Case Number: C4-44
Manufacturer: General Motors Corporation
Make: Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Buick, Chevrolet
Model: W/Rochester Carburetor
Year(s): 1966-1972

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged carburetor flooding due to float saturation with possibility that fuel could overflow onto hot engine resulting in fire.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: No trend in injury or property damage accidents or other safety-related problems has been demonstrated by float saturation in the Rochester Quadrajet carburetor. When float saturation does occur it causes progressive deterioration of engine performance until the driver seeks corrective service action.

Case Number: C4-46
Manufacturer: Western Auto
Make: Wizard
Model: A-5030 Auto Jack Stand
Year(s): Various

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged unsatisfactory performance of automotive jack stand Wizard A-5030 (Sumco J-52) manufactured by the Summit Grinding and Machine Company. Failure of the jack stand while in use could result in injury to individuals under or adjacent to the vehicle.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: Only one test failure occured in 41 tests. Low merchandise return rates and only 9 minor injuries

resulted from 1 million sold. Each accident appeared to be caused by improper use.

Case Number: C7-26
Manufacturer: International Harvester Co.
Make: Heavy Truck
Year(s): 1975-1977

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged cracking of aluminum hub and separation between bearings which may result in damage to braking system elements.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: Recall No. 77V-180.

Case Number: C7-36
Manufacturer: British Leyland Motors, Inc.
Make: Triumph
Model: All
Year(s): 1969-1976

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged malfunctions of windshield wiper system (motor, linkage, arms, blades, and switch) on 1969-1977 Triumph vehicles manufactured by British Leyland Motors, Inc., which can lead to vehicle crashes due to vision obstruction.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: Recall No. 78V-012.

June 1978:

Case Number: 282
Manufacturer: Ford Motor Company
Make: Ford-Mercury
Model: Full Size
Year(s): 1965-1974

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged wheel rim failures in 15 x 5 inch single-piece wheels on 1965-1974 passenger cars manufactured by Ford Motor Company which could result in rapid loss of air from tire.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: No trend in injuries, property damage accidents, or other safety related problems has been demonstrated in the past by the failure of these wheels.

Case Number: C2-32
Manufacturer: General Motors Corporation
Make: Chevrolet - GMC
Model: Pick-up Trucks
Year(s): Various

POSSIBLE PROBLEMS: Alleged wheel rim failures in 15 x 5.5 inch single-piece wheels on 1960-1970, 1/2 ton pick-up trucks manufactured by General Motors Corp. which could result in rapid loss of air from tire.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: A low percentage of alleged failures, vehicles and wheels were being overloaded in many applications. Metalurgical analysis of failed wheels indicated failure resulted from corrosion fatigue. Impending failure of the wheel may be detected by a slow leaking, low or flat tire; visual inspection of the wheel and/or thumping of the tire and wheel assembly.

Case Number: C4-10
Manufacturer: Winnebago Industries
Make: Winnebago
Model: D-24
Year(s): 1970-1971

POSSIBLE PROBLEMS: Alleged front-end suspension overload on 1970 and 1971 Winnebago, D-24 Motorhomes manufactured by Winnebago Industries, Inc. resulting in failure of suspension system components.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: "A virtual total absence of consumer complaints or failure reports on these vehicles seems to indicate that there is a reserve capacity of individual components above their rated values."

Case Number: C5-03
Manufacturer: International Harvester Company
Make: International
Model: Travelall
Year(s): 1974

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged shorting of the battery cable in 1974 International Harvester (IH) Travelall which could cause a spark that might ignite flammable materials in the engine department.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: Analysis of the statistical data developed or disclosed during this investigation revealed that shorting of the positive battery cable was an infant mortality problem which did not cause an unreasonable risk to highway safety.

August 1978:

Case Number: C3-35
Manufacturer: International Harvester Company
Make: International
Model: Travelall 1110 4 x 4
Year(s): 1972-1973

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged steering control problems during hard or panic brake application in 1972 and 1973 IHC Travelalls.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: There were a limited number of 1972 and 1973 model 1110 4 x 4 vehicles with the chassis instability problem.

IHC developed a modification kit to correct the problem.

The small number of consumer complaints and no accidents injuries or fatalities indicates the problem has been resolved with no hazard to traffic safety.

Case Number: C3-43
Manufacturer: General Motors Corporation
Make: Cadillac-Oldsmobile
Model: El Dorado-Toronado
Year(s): 1967-1970

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged failure of front wheel mounting bolts on 1966-1973 Oldsmobile Toronados and 1967-1973 Cadillac El Dorados manufactured by the General Motors Corp. which could result in loss of wheels.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: Torque ranges specified for the nuts on the front wheel mounting bolts on 1966-1973 Oldsmobile Toronado and 1967-1973 Cadillac El Dorado are adequate. In addition, examination of the bolts on the same group of vehicles failed to show that they were defective.

Case Number: C4-08
Manufacturer: International Harvester Company
Make: International
Model: Loadstar 1600, 1700, 1800
Year(s): Various

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Rear axle U-bolts insufficiently torqued, allowing axle to shift and possibly affecting vehicle control.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: The U-bolt nut torque loss occurs with a warning of increasing intensity, and checking and retorquing of rear axle U-bolt nuts is considered by the entire industry to be a preventive maintenance item of owner responsiblity.

Case Number: C4-12
Manufacturer: Champion Home Builders Company
Make: Champion
Model: Motorhome 24-foot
Year(s): 1971

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged front-end suspension overload on 1971 Champion 24-foot Motorhomes manufactured by Champion Home Builders Co. resulting in failure of suspension system components.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: "A virtual total absence of consumer complaints or failure reports on these vehicles seems to indicate that there is a reserve capacity of individual components above their rated values."

Case Number: C4-35
Manufacturer: Nissan Motors of USA
Make: Datsun
Model: 510
Year(s): 1968-1971

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged transverse link failure on 1968-1971 Datsun automobiles which may result in loss of vehicle control.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: Link failure was traced to shipping damage on a very limited number of vehicles. Corrective action by Datsun eliminated shipping methods which caused problems.

Case Number: C5-25
Manufacturer: Volvo of America
Make: Volvo
Model: All
Year(s): 1973

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged failure of the front bumper support bracket which could result in loss of bumper.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: The nature of the defect is such that failure would occur, if at all, early in the life of the vehicle. No reports of failures have been received in the last few years.

Case Number: C2-53
Manufacturer: Ford Motor Company
Make: Ford
Model: All
Year(s): 1967-1969

POSSIBLE PROBLEM: Alleged corrosion-induced failures of dual brake master cylinders installed in 1967 and later model domestic passenger cars which could result in loss of braking.

REASON FOR TERMINATION: While opened as a case concerning Ford-built master cylinders, it was found that the manufacturer's varying treatment of warranty repairs introduced a bias singling out Ford products. In fact, it was found that the problems experienced were representative of the state-of-the-art.

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

I. INVESTIGATIONS

Report for Period Ending: September 30, 1978

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.
C2-61	Ford	Mercury	1969-1971	15 x 6.5 Single Piece Wheel	Disc Failure Could Result in Wheel Loss.
C4-07	Ford	Mercury	1970-1971	Hood Latch	Failure of Latch Mechanism Could Result in Hood Pop-up Obscuring Driver Vision.
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.
C4-17	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.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for Period Ending: September 30, 1978

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	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.
C4-28	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 (suspended)	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.
C4-52	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.

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CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for Period Ending: September 30, 1978

CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
C4-59	Volkswagen (suspended)	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.
C5-01	General Motors (suspended)	Chevrolet Corvettes	1964-1974	Rear Wheel Bearing	Failure of Rear Wheel Bearings. Wheels may Bind up or Lock.
C5-07	General Motors (suspended)	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	Failure to meet load rating. Failure of jack stand during use could result in injury to persons under or adjacent to vehicle.
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.
C6-22	American Motors	Pacer	1975	Power Steering Gear	Alleged Leakage of Rack and Pinion Seal Resulting in Possible Loss of Steering Control.

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CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for Period Ending: September 30, 1978

	CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
	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.
(1)	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.
(2)	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.
(2)	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.
(1)	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.

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CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for Period Ending: September 30, 1978

	CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
(2)	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.
	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.
(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.
(3)	C7-34	Hollywood Accessories	Model 646	All	Hydraulic Jack	Leveling Mechanism may Fail if Load is not Centered on Jack Saddle.

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CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for Period Ending: September 30, 1978

	CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
(2)	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.
	C7-39	Ford	Mercury Capri	1971-1972	Headlight Switch	Switch may Fall Apart Causing Headlights and Taillights to Cease Operation.
	C7-40	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.
(1)	C8-01	General Motors	Cadillac	1975-1977	Electronic Fuel Injection System	Engine Compartment Fires due to Possible Fuel Leakage in Fuel Injection System.
	C8-02	Ford	All Models with V-8 Engines and C-6 or FMX Transmissions	1973-1978	Transmission Linkage	Transmission may Jump from Park to Reverse.
	C8-03	Peugeot, Inc.	304 and 504	1972-1975	Seat Belt System	Retractor Fails to Operate Properly. Belt becomes Damaged or Entangled.
	C8-04	Ford	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.

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CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for Period Ending: September 30, 1978

	CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
(1)	C8-06	American Motors	Hornet Gremlin	1975 1976 1977	Power Steering Hose	Power Steering Hose Fails due to Location next to Exhaust Manifold. Results in Loss of Power Steering and Possible Engine Compartment Fire.
(1)	C8-07	American Motors	All	1975,1976	Ignition System	Ignition System Failure Causes Stalling.
	C8-08	Kool Klutch Co.	Kool Flex Imperial	1973-1977	Engine Cooling Fan	Cracking and/or Separation of Engine Cooling Fan Blades.
	C8-19	Ford	Capri	1971-1978	Manual, Floor-Mounted Gear Shift Lever	Gear Shift Lever Breaks or Detaches from Transmission.
	C8-20	Ford	Granada Monarch	1975-1977	Power Steering Control Valve	Steering Instability.
(1)	C8-22	Overhead Door Co.	Jifflox 5000 Series Convertor Dolly	1977	Anti-Lock Sensor	Sensor Produces an Erratic Signal to Driver's Anti-Lock Warning Light in Truck Lab.
(1)	C8-23	General Motors	Olds Starfire V-6 Buick Skylark V-6 Chev Monza V-8	1975	Wheel Bearing	Wheel Bearing Failure may Damage or Break Wheel Spindles and Wheel can Separate from Vehicle.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for Month Ending: September 30, 1978

CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
C8-24	Broadwheel Co.	13" and 14" Wheel	All	Boat Trailer Wheels	Rim Detaches from Spider due to Weld Failure, Causing Wheel to Separate from Trailer.
C8-25	Chrysler Corp.	Dodge Vans, Models B-300, MB-300, CB-400, MB-400	1973-1977	Front Disc Brakes	Temporary Loss of Front Brakes due to Caliper Contact with Frame.
C8-26	Ford	Heavy Trucks Models B,C,F,L,W, and DCL	1975-1978	Wiring Harness Connecting Rear-Wheel Sensor Junction Block to Anti-Lock Computer Module.	Failure of Wiring Due to Flexing while in Motion may Result in Reduced Braking Capability.
C8-27	Ford	Granada & Monarch	1975-1977	Fuel Line Hose	Hose Failure may Result in Engine Compartment Fires.
C8-28	Fiat	X-1/9 & 128	1973-1977	Front Wheel Bearing	Bearing Failure may Cause Loss of Vehicle Control.
C8-29	Ford	Pinto, Bobcat	1973-1975	Steering Coupling Flange	Failure may Result in Loss of Steering Control
C8-33	General Motors	Buick, Pontiac, Oldsmobile	1977	231 V-6 Engine	Alleged Stalling may Result in Loss of Control or Accident in Traffic Situation.
C8-39	Volkswagen	Porsche 911	1977	Engine Compartment Fires	Possible Engine Compartment Fires

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CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

II. INVESTIGATION IN LITIGATION OR INITIAL DETERMINATION

Report for Period Ending: September 30, 1978

	CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
(1)	140	Ford (FINAL DEFECT DETERMINATION MADE 8-12-75, IN LITIGATION)	Mustang & Cougar	1968-1969	Seat Back Pivot Arm	Inboard Pivot Failures. Seat Back Could Collapse Resulting in Loss of Vehicle Control.
(1)	C3-11	General Motors (IN LITIGATION 2-13-74)	Cadillac	1959-1960	Steering Pitman Arm	Fatigue Failure Causing Loss of Vehicle Control.
(1)	C3-29	Ford (FINAL DEFECT DETERMINATION MADE 12-30-75, IN LITIGATION)	Capri	1971-1973	Windshield Wiper	Arm Detaches from Drive Shaft Motor. Failure due to Underpower. Could result in Loss of Driver Visibility.
(1)	C4-23	General Motors (INITIAL DEFECT DETERMINATION MADE 2-14-77)	Opel	1964-1971	Fuel Tank and System	Fuel System Integrity. Tail Light Mounting Bolt can Penetrate Fuel Tank in Right Rear End Impacts at Speeds Below 10 mph.
(4)	C7-38	Ford/GM (INITIAL DEFECT DETERMINATION MADE 5-8-78) Regarding Pinto & Bobcat Vehicles (except station wagons)	Pinto/Vega Subcompact	1970-1976	Gas Tank	Readily Damaged in Rear End Collision. Possibility of Fire or Explosion.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED SAFETY RELATED DEFECTS

Report for Month Ending: September 30, 1978

CASE NO.	MANUFACTURER/MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
C8-18	Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. (INITIAL DEFECT DETERMINATION MADE 7-9-78) Regarding Firestone 500 Steel-Belted Radial Tires and Identical Tires Manufactured by the Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. under other brand names	All Steel-Belted Radial Tires	Various	Tires	Tire Failures may Result in Loss of Vehicle Control.
(1)	Vehicles have been recalled by the manufacturer.				
(2)	Manufacturer has recalled some models.				
(3)	Jacks have been recalled by the manufacturer.				
(4)	Pinto and Bobcat vehicles have been recalled by the manufacturer.				
(5)	Subsequent to development of this listing, the manufacturer has agreed to recall the Firestone 500 Steel-Belted Radial Tires and identical tires manufactured by the Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. under other brand names.				

HS Form 338A (Feb. 1975)

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

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
December 29, 1978

NHTSA 117-78 (Ames)
Tel.No. (202) 426-0670

28,000 RENAULTS
BEING RECALLED

Renault USA, Inc., will recall more than 28,000 of its 1976, 1977, and 1978 Renault models 5 (Le Car), 12, 15 and 17 vehicles to modify their throttle return systems, the U.S. Department of Transporation announced today.

In the case of the Renault model 5 only, the company also will replace the rear turn signal lenses, DOT said.

The vehicles are manufactured in France by Regie Nationale des Usines.

The department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said that as a result of its compliance testing program it determined that certain of these vehicles do not conform to Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 124. This standard establishes requirements for the return of a vehicle's throttle to the idle position within a certain period of time after the driver's foot is removed from the accelerator.

Vehicles involved in the throttle system recall include Renault 5 models built from September 1975 through December 1977; Renault 12 models manufactured from February 1975 to March 1977; Renault 15 models built from January 1975 to May 1976; and Renault 17 models built from February 1975 to September 1977.

-more-

Renault reported that it had no knowledge of any accidents or injuries resulting from the throttle system problem.

Renault reminds vehicle owners that their vehicles are equipped with an emission control device that keeps the throttle from returning immediately to idle speed, and that this condition should not be confused with the sluggish throttle return condition.

The turn signal lens recall involves only Renault 5 vehicles manufactured from September 1975 through December 1977. The amber coloring of the rear turn signal lenses on these vehicles may fade as a result of long exposure to the elements. As a result, other motorists may be confused by, or fail to correctly interpret, the flashing of such a lamp. Such confusion may prevent other motorists from reacting promptly and safely to such a signal.

The NHTSA advises motorists that these recall corrections will be made without charge, and recommends that vehicle owners visit their dealers promptly when they receive recall notification letters from the manufacturer.

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

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
December 29, 1978

NHTSA 119-78 (Chor)
Tel.No. (202) 426-0670

1978 RECALL SUMMARY

Slightly more than nine million motor vehicles and more than 14.6 million tires were recalled for safety defects in 1978, according to figures released today by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The figures, compiled by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, indicate a drop from the record 12.9 million vehicles recalled in 1977, but the 14.5 million tires being recalled by the Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. constitute the largest single tire recall in history.

In all, domestic manufacturers recalled 8.1 million vehicles in 199 recall campaigns. Foreign manufacturers recalled 1 million vehicles in 71 campaigns bringing the yearly recall total to 9.1 million cars, trucks, buses and motorcycles.

The four major U.S. automakers recalled 7.7 million of the domestic total. Ford Motor Co. recalled nearly 3.8 million vehicles. General Motors Corp. recalled 1.7 million vehicles, Chrysler slightly more than 1.5 million vehicles and American Motors 600,000 vehicles.

The federal safety agency reported that 58 recall campaigns, involving approximately 4.7 million vehicles were influenced by government actions or investigations, as was the Firestone recall. During the past year, NHTSA opened 18 formal safety investigations.

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The largest single vehicle recall in 1978 was conducted by Ford Motor Co. and involved 1.5 million 1971-76 Pinto and Bobcat cars that had potentially unsafe fuel tanks. General Motors recalled 320,000 subcompact Chevettes for a gas tank problem and 265,000 Chevrolet, Pontiac, Oldsmobile and Buick models for defective rear axles. Chrysler Corp. recalled 1.1 million Aspen and Volare models to correct steering defects.

In addition to the vehicle and tire recalls, there were 850,000 units of motor vehicle equipment recalled under NHTSA regulations.

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