

Have a Vehicle Safety Complaint? Why U.S. DOT Wants to Hear From You

No one likes a complainer, right? Well, not necessarily. One federal agency that has always actively sought complaints from consumers is the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Perhaps most recognized for its New Car Assessment Program (NCAP), better known as "5-star government crash test ratings," the agency also oversees and manages the recall of defective vehicles. While most recalls are initiated by manufacturers, NHTSA influenced or initiated recalls typically result in a greater number of individual vehicles being recalled each year.

In uncovering the safety defects that lead to an agency recall, NHTSA is largely dependent on direct reports of alleged defects from everyday consumers. To encourage consumer input, the agency uses every available avenue. NHTSA efforts to get unsafe vehicles off the road are fueled by calls to the DOT Vehicle Safety Hotline, complaints sent by mail, and reports filed via the Internet.

In fact, to make filing a complaint easier, NHTSA includes defect reporting as a function of its consumer safety website, www.safercar.gov. With a single click of the mouse, visitors to Safercar.gov can go from the home page to filling out an online complaint form, at their convenience, and with relative ease of use.

How many complaints does it take to initiate a recall investigation? There is no set number. Every phone call, Internet report or complaint letter to NHTSA is carefully reviewed by vehicle safety experts and the information posted (with names and personal identifiers removed to protect privacy) on the agency website, easily accessible via www.safercar.gov.

NHTSA technical staff members continuously monitor all complaints to determine trends and next steps. It could be *your* vehicle safety complaint to NHTSA that signals agency engineers to open an investigation. As soon as a trend is suspected and the issue poses a potential safety risk, the agency opens an official recall investigation, with the ultimate goal of saving lives caused by motor vehicle failure and crashes.

So if you're having a problem with your vehicle and you think it might be safety related, don't hesitate to complain. NHTSA is ready to take your complaint by mail, phone or online. Direct input from consumers like you is invaluable to the agency's ability to fulfill its mission and improve service when it matters most: when lives are at stake.

<call out copy>

Think your vehicle has a defect?

VISIT

www.safercar.gov

CALL

888-327-4236

Vehicle Safety Hotline

MAIL

NHTSA, Office of Defects Investigation (NVS-210)

400 7th St., SW

Washington, DC 20590

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