

requirements of 49 CFR 571.208, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 208, "Occupant Crash Protection," and has filed an appropriate report pursuant to 49 CFR Part 573, "Defect and Noncompliance Reports." Cantab has also applied to be exempted from the notification and remedy requirements of 49 U.S.C. Chapter 301—"Motor Vehicle Safety" on the basis that the noncompliance is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety.

This notice of receipt of an application is published under 49 U.S.C. 30118 and 30120 and does not represent any agency decision or other exercise of judgment concerning the merits of the application.

Paragraph S4.1.4 of FMVSS No. 208 requires that vehicles manufactured on or after September 1, 1989, be equipped with a restraint system at each front outboard designated seating position that meets the standard's frontal crash protection requirements by means that require no action by vehicle occupants. This type of system is referred to as an automatic restraint system.

The agency granted an exemption for Cantab to manufacture vehicles without automatic restraints between May 16, 1990 and May 1, 1993. Cantab imported and manufactured nine vehicles without automatic restraint systems during this time period. However, after the exemption had expired, Cantab imported and manufactured nine more vehicles without automatic restraint systems. Of these nine vehicles, seven entered the U.S. during 1994 and two in 1995. These vehicles all meet the requirements of Standard No. 208 prior to the implementation of automatic restraint requirements. Cantab has subsequently applied for an exemption from the automatic restraint requirements for this type of vehicle. Notice of receipt of its application was published on July 14, 1995 [60 FR 36328].

Cantab supports its application for inconsequential noncompliance with the following:

[Cantab] submits that, during the entire time period subsequent to its initial grant of exemption in May of 1990, it has imported and manufactured a total of eighteen cars. Nine of these were imported during the period of exemption, nine subsequent to its lapsing and prior to [Cantab's] submission of a second application for exemption. Each of these eighteen cars were identically constructed to meet all applicable FMVSS, including those of FMVSS 208 prior to implementation of the automatic restraint requirements. During this time, [Cantab] has made substantial progress in the development of a dual air bag system and expects to have it installed and operative within a year.

[Cantab] has previously suggested to NHTSA in its [May 10, 1995] petition for exemption, the unusual nature of its vehicles—cars driven by enthusiasts for pleasure, rather than daily for business commuting or on long trips, by people who own two or more other passenger cars for such purposes.

[Cantab] respectfully suggests that its nine noncomplying cars, representing a minuscule proportion of the total number of motor vehicles sold and operated in the U.S. during the period of 1994–1995, operated as noted above, constructed with well-proven safety systems, would not materially affect overall motor vehicle safety, and that their operation would be in the public interest and would be consistent with the objectives of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act.

Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views, and arguments on the application of Cantab, described above. Comments should refer to the docket number and be submitted to: Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5109, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, D.C., 20509. It is requested but not required that six copies be submitted.

All comments received before the close of business on the closing date indicated below will be considered. The application and supporting materials, and all comments received after the closing date will also be filed and will be considered to the extent possible. When the application is granted or denied, the notice will be published in the Federal Register pursuant to the authority indicated below.

Comment closing date: October 18, 1995.

(15 U.S.C. 1417; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8)

Issued on: September 12, 1995.

Barry Felrice,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

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[Docket No. 95-76; Notice 1]

Ford Motor Company; Receipt of Application for Decision of Inconsequential Noncompliance

Ford Motor Company (Ford) of Dearborn, Michigan has determined that some of its vehicles fail to comply with the display identification requirements of 49 CFR 571.101, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 101, "Controls and Displays," and has filed an appropriate report pursuant to 49 CFR Part 573, "Defect and Noncompliance Report." Ford has also applied to be exempted from the notification and remedy requirements of

49 U.S.C. Chapter 301—"Motor Vehicle Safety" on the basis that the noncompliance is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety.

This notice of receipt of an application is published under 49 U.S.C. 30118 and 30120 and does not represent any agency decision or other exercise of judgment concerning the merits of the application.

In Footnote 3 to Table 2 in Standard No. 101, it is specified that, "[i]f the odometer indicates kilometers, then 'KILOMETERS' or 'km' shall appear, otherwise, no identification is required."

Ford manufactured approximately 300,000 vehicles (1995 model year Rangers, Explorers, Crown Victorias, and Grand Marquis, certain 1994 and 1995 Mustangs, and certain 1995 Ford-built Mazda B-Series pickup trucks) which may not comply with the display identification requirements of Standard No. 101. Within the total population of 300,000 vehicles, any number of between 24 and 124 vehicles were manufactured with an odometer that measures distance in units of kilometers but is not labeled as such as Standard No. 101 requires. Ford has already found and corrected 24 of these noncompliant odometers in service, therefore, up to 100 of them could still exist.

Ford supports its application for inconsequential noncompliance with the following:

In Ford's judgment, this condition is inconsequential as it relates to motor vehicle safety. [Ford's] basis for this belief is that: 1) an owner of an affected vehicle will readily recognize the condition and return the vehicle to a Ford dealer for corrections; 2) even if the condition were to go undetected, the role of the odometer in alerting drivers to potential safety-related problems is minimal; and 3) no reports of accidents or injuries related to this condition are known or expected.

Ford believes, as evidenced by those odometers already identified by owners, that this condition becomes obvious to an owner early in the "life" of a vehicle because of more rapid mileage accumulations, better than expected fuel economy, etc., and that an owner will seek repair for the condition through a Ford dealer. Ford will continue to remedy the condition of any of the vehicles brought to its attention at no cost to the owners, under normal warranty terms.

With respect to the relationship of the odometer to safety, in past rulemaking (FR Vol. 47, No. 216 at 50497) the agency concluded that the role of the odometer in alerting drivers to potential safety-related problems is not crucial. This conclusion was among those leading to the rescission of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 127, Speedometers and Odometers. That standard contemplated that the purpose of the odometer requirement was twofold. First,

it was to inform purchasers of used vehicles of the actual mileage of the vehicles they were purchasing to enable them to ascertain the probable condition of the vehicle. Second, it was to provide an owner with information so that he or she could maintain a periodic maintenance schedule. In rescinding Safety Standard No. 127, the agency acknowledged that its reliance on the Tri-Level Study of the Causes of Traffic Accidents by the Indiana University Institute for Research in Public Safety, which led to the odometer requirement, was misplaced. The agency concluded that although the study found that problems with vehicle systems were causal or contributing factors in up to 25 percent of the accidents studies—such as problems with the brake system, tires, lights and signals, for example—all of those causes involved components which must be periodically replaced or serviced regardless of mileage. The agency thereby concluded that deterioration in performance, such as brake pulling, or in appearance, such as tire wear, etc., are readily apparent to the driver and should do more to alert the driver to potential safety-related problems than the distance traveled indication on the odometer.

Ford agrees with the agency's conclusion that the odometer reading is not a crucial factor in alerting drivers to potential safety-related vehicle problems, and therefore, it submits that the absence of the "km" designation is not crucial in this regard. We believe the vehicles that are the subject of this petition present no direct or indirect risk to motor vehicle safety. Furthermore, in the case of the vehicles in question, even if the odometer indication were a crucial indicator or required periodic maintenance, the odometer reading, if relied on for this purpose, would cause a driver to seek maintenance sooner than required because the indicated mileage would be approximately 1.6 times greater than the distance actually traveled.

Therefore, while the absence of the "km" designation is technically a noncompliance, and the odometer of the affected vehicles registers distance traveled in kilometers while the speedometer registers in miles per hour, we believe, for the reasons cited above, the condition presents no risk to motor vehicle safety.

Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views, and arguments on the application of Ford, described above. Comments should refer to the docket number and be submitted to: Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5109, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC 20590. It is requested but not required that six copies be submitted.

All comments received before the close of business on the closing date indicated below will be considered. The application and supporting materials, and all comments received after the closing date will also be filed and will be considered to the extent possible. When the application is granted or denied, the notice will be published in

the Federal Register pursuant to the authority indicated below.

Comment closing date: October 18, 1995. (15 U.S.C. 1417; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8)

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Barry Felrice,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

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[Docket No. 95-39; Notice 2]

Volkswagen of America, Inc.; Grant of Application for Decision of Inconsequential Noncompliance

Volkswagen of America, Inc. (VWoA) of Auburn Hills, Michigan, determined that some of its vehicles fail to comply with the power window requirements of 49 CFR 571.118, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 118, "Power-Operated Window, Partition, and Roof Panel Systems," and filed an appropriate report pursuant to 49 CFR Part 573, "Defect and Noncompliance Reports." VWoA has also applied to be exempted from the notification and remedy requirements of 49 U.S.C. Chapter 301—"Motor Vehicle Safety" on the basis that the noncompliance is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety.

Notice of receipt of the application was published on May 17, 1995, and an opportunity afforded for comment (60 FR 26475).

Paragraph S4(e) of FMVSS No. 118 states that power operated windows may be closed only "during the interval between the time the locking device which controls the activation of the vehicle's engine is turned off and the opening of either of a two-door vehicle's doors or, in the case of a vehicle with more than two doors, the opening of its front doors."

From September 1, 1992 through March 5, 1995, VWoA manufactured approximately 1,200 1995 GTI vehicles and 18,795 1993-1995 Jetta III vehicles that do not comply with the power window requirements of FMVSS No. 118. The power windows in these vehicles can be operated when the ignition key is in the "off" position and the passenger side front door has been opened. The windows should not be able to be operated in this scenario.

VWoA supported its application for inconsequential noncompliance with the following:

The purpose of the requirement in S4(e) of FMVSS 118 specifying that the power window system not be functional if the ignition key is in the "off" position and one of the front doors has

been opened, is to reduce the possibility of unsupervised children operating the power windows in the vehicle. S4(e) is based upon the assumption that before one of the front doors has been opened, an adult remains in the vehicle to supervise and protect children from the safety risks associated with the operation of the power window system. S4(e) further assumes that after one of the front vehicle doors has been opened, no adult remains in the vehicle and thereby creates a risk that children remaining in the vehicle may injure themselves by activating operational power windows without supervision. S4(e) seeks to eliminate that risk.

In the case of the affected vehicles, the power windows cease to be operable if the driver door is opened, but remain operational for a period of 10 minutes after the passenger side front door has been opened. The rationale supporting the 10 minute period is to allow the driver to close any open windows even though he may already have turned off the ignition and the passenger may have opened the door and exited the vehicle. It is a convenience feature permitted by law in Europe and offered by Volkswagen to the market in Europe as a convenience feature.

The power-operated roof panel systems cannot be operated after the ignition key has been turned off.

VWoA believes that its European configuration inadvertently built into certain vehicles delivered in the United States does not affect their safety in a discernible way. VWoA believes that as long as the driver door of the vehicle has not been opened, a person of driving age inevitably remains in the vehicle because the exiting of the driver on the passenger side front door is extremely difficult and therefore unlikely. The affected vehicles are equipped with bucket seats and a center transmission console which cause the movement of the driver to the passenger side of the vehicle without contortion to be difficult and virtually impossible. Also, it makes no sense to suggest that a driver would exit the vehicle on the passenger side of a vehicle with bucket seats and [a] floor mounted transmission lever when he can conveniently open the driver's door for exit.

VWoA has received no customer complaints or claims relating to the ability of the windows to operate after the passenger door has been opened.

It should also be noted that the Volkswagen Owner's Manual contains an express warning against leaving children unattended in a vehicle and against misuse of the ignition key. The warning reads as follows: