

## Bumper Rule Gives Some Cars More Time

As a result of recent amendments the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has generally strengthened its "bumper" standard — FMVSS 215 — issued in April. At the same time it has temporarily exempted what the safety administration estimates to be 13 to 14 per cent of all 1974 model domestic automobile production and 15 per cent of all imported 1974 model cars from pendulum tests intended to prevent bumper mismatch.

In June the safety administration proposed to increase rear impact speeds for 1974 model cars from 2.5 miles per hour to 5 miles per hour in barrier crash tests and from 4 miles per hour to 5 miles per hour in pendulum tests. Except for corner impacts this in effect requires the same impact tests for both front and rear ends of vehicles beginning with the 1974 model year.

In its most recent bumper rulemaking action the NHTSA has adhered to the announced plan but also put off for one year pendulum test requirements for "passenger cars with wheelbase of 115 inches or less, if they are convertibles, vehicles with no back seat, or 'hardtops' (vehicles with no 'B pillar' above the bottom of the window opening)."

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The reason for the selective one year exemption, the safety administration says, is that "it has been determined that if these vehicles were forced to comply with the pendulum tests by the Sept. 1, 1973, date, a substantial disruption of the manufacturers' production and tooling schedules would result, with extremely large cost penalties."

Even though popular imports such as the Volkswagen and Toyota have a wheelbase considerably less than 115 inches they will not be exempted from the pendulum test — barring design changes — because most of their models have structural support "B pillars." Apparently the exemption will largely

apply to two-passenger foreign sports cars and many "muscle cars," since such cars generally have short wheelbases and seldom have structural support "B pillars."

The safety administration has also postponed until the 1976 model year its corner impact pendulum tests at 30 degrees between heights of 16 and 20 inches for all cars. Beginning with 1974 models, cars other than the small exempted ones must withstand corner impacts delivered only at a height of 20 inches. The agency said it has made this change to "allow for more economical changeover" after manufacturers had complained of "retooling and restyling problems associated with corner impacts at heights below 20 inches."

(cont'd. on page 3)

IMPACT TEST	TEST SPEEDS FOR EACH MODEL YEAR FMVSS 215			
	1973	1974	1975	1976
Barrier:				
Front	5 mph	5 mph	5 mph	5 mph
Rear	2.5	5	5	5
Corner	—	—	—	—
Pendulum:				
Front <sup>1</sup>	—	5*	5	5
Rear <sup>1</sup>	—	5*	5	5
Corner <sup>2</sup>	—	3*	3	3

\*Until August 31, 1974, these requirements do not apply to any vehicle that has: ". . . a wheelbase of 115 inches or less and that either —

- (a) Has a convertible top;
- (b) Has no roof support structure between the A-pillar and the rear roof support structure; or
- (c) Has no designated seating position behind the front designated seating position."

<sup>1</sup>In both front and rear pendulum tests, there will be three impacts at 20 inches and three impacts between 16 inches and 20 inches.

<sup>2</sup>For the 1974 and 1975 model years one corner impact at 20 inches at each end of the vehicle is required. With the 1976 model year an additional impact between 16 inches and 20 inches will be required on the opposite corner at each end, thus covering all four corners of the vehicle.

(cont'd. from page 2)

Manufacturers had also complained that the June proposal was too vague in its provision that the impact tests result in "no damage" that would adversely affect "any aspect of performance that relates to motor vehicle safety." In the final amendment, the agency has specified that "the vehicle's propulsion, suspension, steering, and braking systems shall suffer no damage, shall remain in adjustment and shall operate in the normal manner" following the tests.

The rule also requires that during and after the prescribed tests "each lamp or reflective device shall be free of cracks" and shall comply with the federal standard governing lights (FMVSS 108); hood, trunk and door latches must be operable "in the normal manner"; fuel and cooling systems, and their sealing devices, must be operable "in the normal manner" and be free of "leaks or constricted fluid passages," and the exhaust system must be free of "constricted or open joints." Vehicles' engines are to be "operating at idling speed" at the onset of the barrier tests. There are no similar requirements for the pendulum tests.

The amended standard will not necessarily require vehicle design that will prevent expensive-to-repair damage, such as to quarter panels and other sheet metal, grilles and other trim. Dr. William Haddon, Jr., president of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, told The Washington Post at the time the amendments were proposed in June that he has no evidence that the changes will effectively reduce property damage. He was quoted as saying that bumper systems that offer protection at twice the five mile per hour speed are "a design reality right now."

## **Facts Or Fictions: Safety Council Dilemma**

The National Safety Council, faced with "disappointing" results from its recent anti-drunk driving publicity campaign, is now trying to work out a new course in its public promotion of highway safety themes.

At its just-concluded annual "safety congress" in Chicago, the organization was told by its chief highway safety advisory panel, the Traffic Conference, to launch an aggressive campaign to "publicize known research facts" about such overlooked highway safety issues as roadside booby traps, small-car hazards and blood alcohol concentrations of drivers' in crashes.

But at the same time the council's public information staff was reporting on plans to launch a national effort, using public service broadcast time, to push sales of its "Defensive Driving" program — "a real money maker," according to NSC's public information director Donald T. McEwan.

(At yet another NSC session, the organization's general manager, Gene Miller, assured that NSC is finally conducting a "scientific evaluation" to determine whether the years-old DDC program has had any effectiveness in terms of reducing highway losses. Results of the evaluation, he said, will be released "soon.")

## ***NSC Balks On Mandatory Belt Use***

The National Safety Council's board of directors has declined to support efforts to win state legislation requiring safety belt use by drivers in vehicles equipped with the lifesaving devices.

The governing body's no-action decision came when it voted to table a recommendation by the organization's Traffic Conference urging that the council go on record as endorsing "laws requiring drivers to use lap belts in any motor vehicle operated on a highway." Such public health laws have been introduced in at least three states' legislatures in this country, and already have been enacted in parts of Australia.

According to Dr. Robert L. Hess, director of the University of Michigan's Highway Safety Research Institute, the Australian experience has shown that such laws increase belt use. There is 90 per cent compliance with the Australian law, he said in a recent speech.

McEwan told a session of public relations men that public response to the council's current "Scream Bloody Murder" campaign against drunk driving has been "disappointing." There was no "market pre-testing" of the campaign prior to its initiation last year, nor has the council studied public reaction to it to determine why it fell short of expectations, he said. He estimated that the campaign had cost the council \$80,000 to \$100,000.

McEwan said that the council will not pursue the drunk driving theme in its next publicity campaign, both because the "Scream Bloody Murder" results were poor and because NSC staff doesn't want to "compete" with the Department of Transportation's Alcohol Countermeasures Program. "If we were to come out with a competitive program, it would destroy DOT's (current campaign)," McEwan remarked, and the result would be "a confused public" because it wouldn't know "who's in charge here."

The Traffic Conference's recommendations that NSC base future publicity campaigns on "known research facts" grew from a study recently completed by the conference's problems and needs committee. A report accompanying the recommendations urged NSC to "get away from its 'numbers game' of projecting holiday death toll 'guesstimates' . . . and start its task of doing meaningful work in the field" of publicizing highway loss reduction issues.

NSC "as a whole has lost stature in the past decade or so in the field of traffic safety . . . partly because of the reputation it has in the eyes of the public as an organization which merely prognosticates holiday death tolls." Such figures "make good newspaper 'filler'," the report said, but "they are largely meaningless

since the tolls are usually not much larger than on ordinary weekends, and often not even as large."

The report urged that the NSC "start its task of doing meaningful work in the field" with a program to "publish and publicize, without hedging, known research facts that can help lower the highway toll."

The council was told that its public information program should be "leaning heavily" on public service TV time and equal time broadcast provisions of the Federal Communications Commission to alert the public to, among other things, known research facts involving:

- **Highway booby traps** and "what can be done to eliminate and, where feasible, avoid them";
- Hazards to **small automobile** occupants "insofar as what occurs when small vehicles are hit by larger ones" as documented in numerous government and private studies;
- Statistics, drawn from real world crash reports, on levels of blood **alcohol** concentration in drivers in severe highway crashes;
- Effectiveness of **shoulder and lap belts** in crashes.

The Traffic Conference recommendations also urged that "the government immediately release" funds for scholarships in the field of traffic safety and called on the National Safety Council to "endeavor to eliminate the word 'accident' from its vocabulary" in discussing highway crashes.

## 'YOUTHS' Censures Volpe

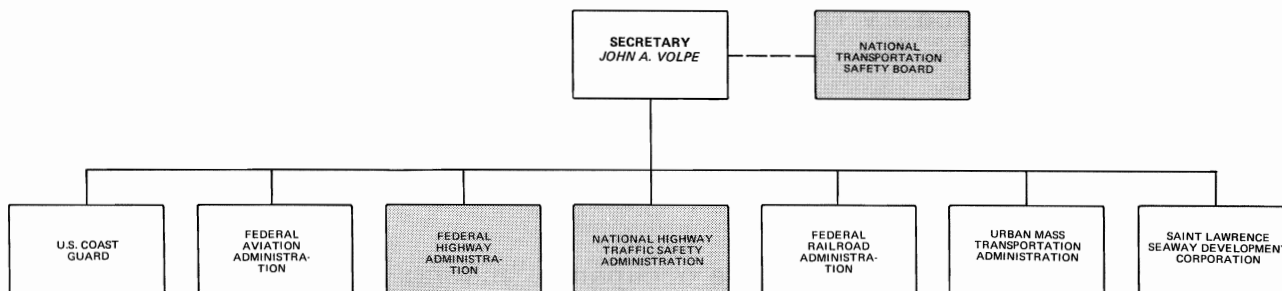
An advisory group set up by Transportation Secretary John A. Volpe to suggest ways "to involve young people in a national crusade for increased highway safety" has censured the Department of Transportation for postponing required installation of passive restraints in new cars.

At a four-day conference of YOUTHS (Youth Order United Toward Highway Safety) in Oakland, Calif., some 123 delegates also resolved to "stop the slaughter (of young people) at the hands of those who would take our lives with inadequate educational programs, poorly built cars and poorly designed and maintained highways."

The delegates called for, among other things, increased federal funds for highway safety, laws "making operation of a motor vehicle by persons with blood alcohol concentration of .10 per cent or more illegal per se," intensification of efforts to combat drug abuse, stricter state testing and licensing procedures and improved driver education programs.

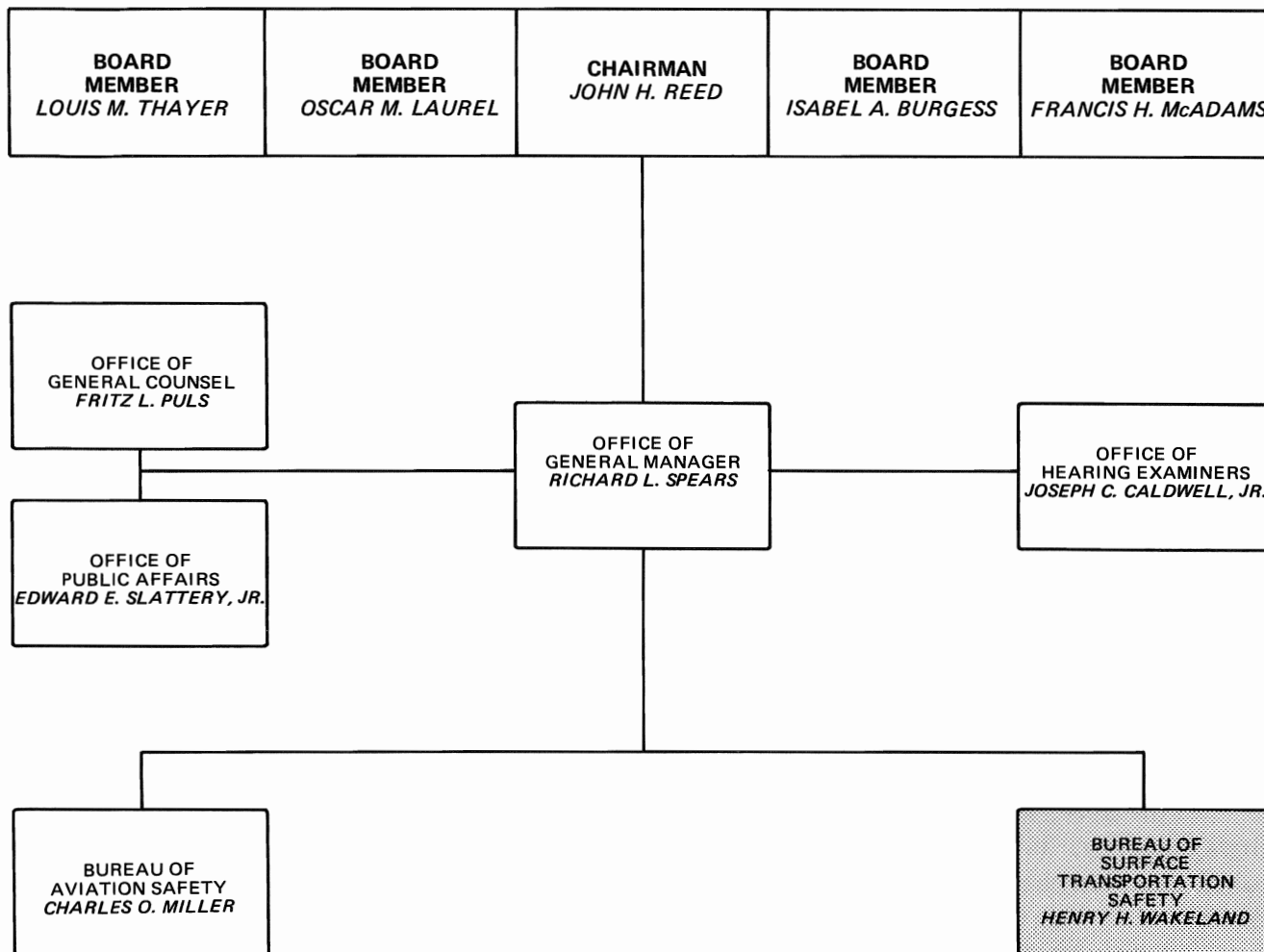
The Department of Transportation consists of seven agencies. Those shown on these pages are primarily concerned with either highway or motor vehicle safety. The National Transportation Safety Board is considered a federal transportation "watch dog" and is not an operating agency of DOT. The Department's address is 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Its central telephone number is 202-426-4000.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

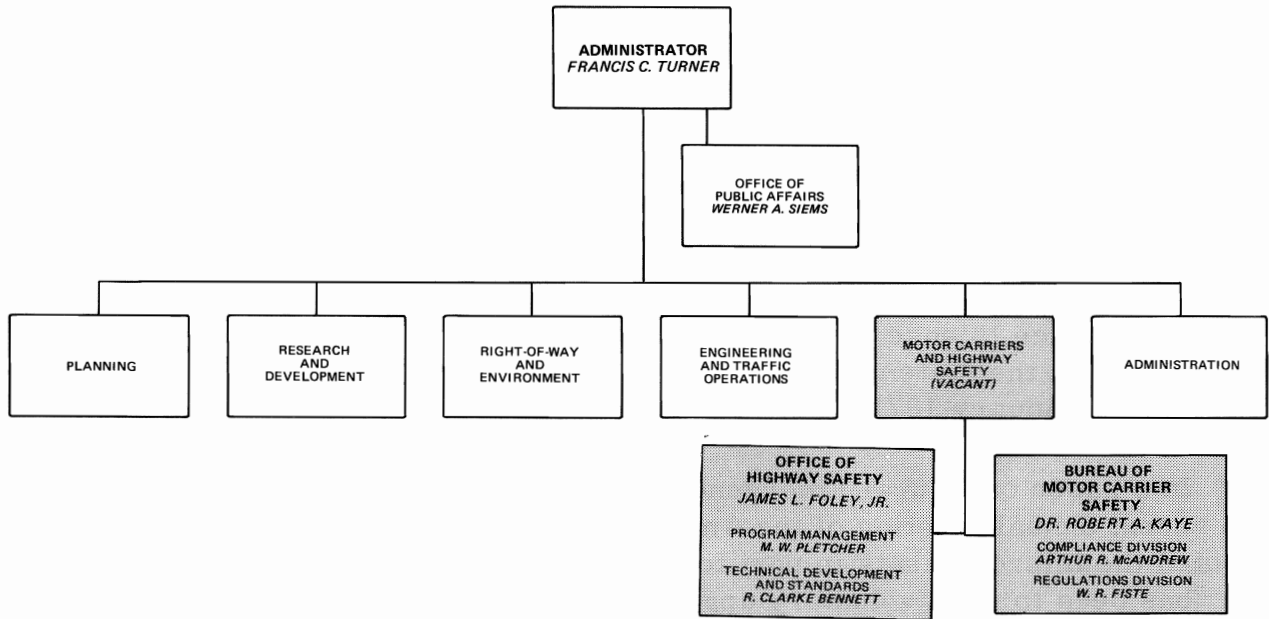


AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE FOR MOTOR VEHICLE OR HIGHWAY SAFETY

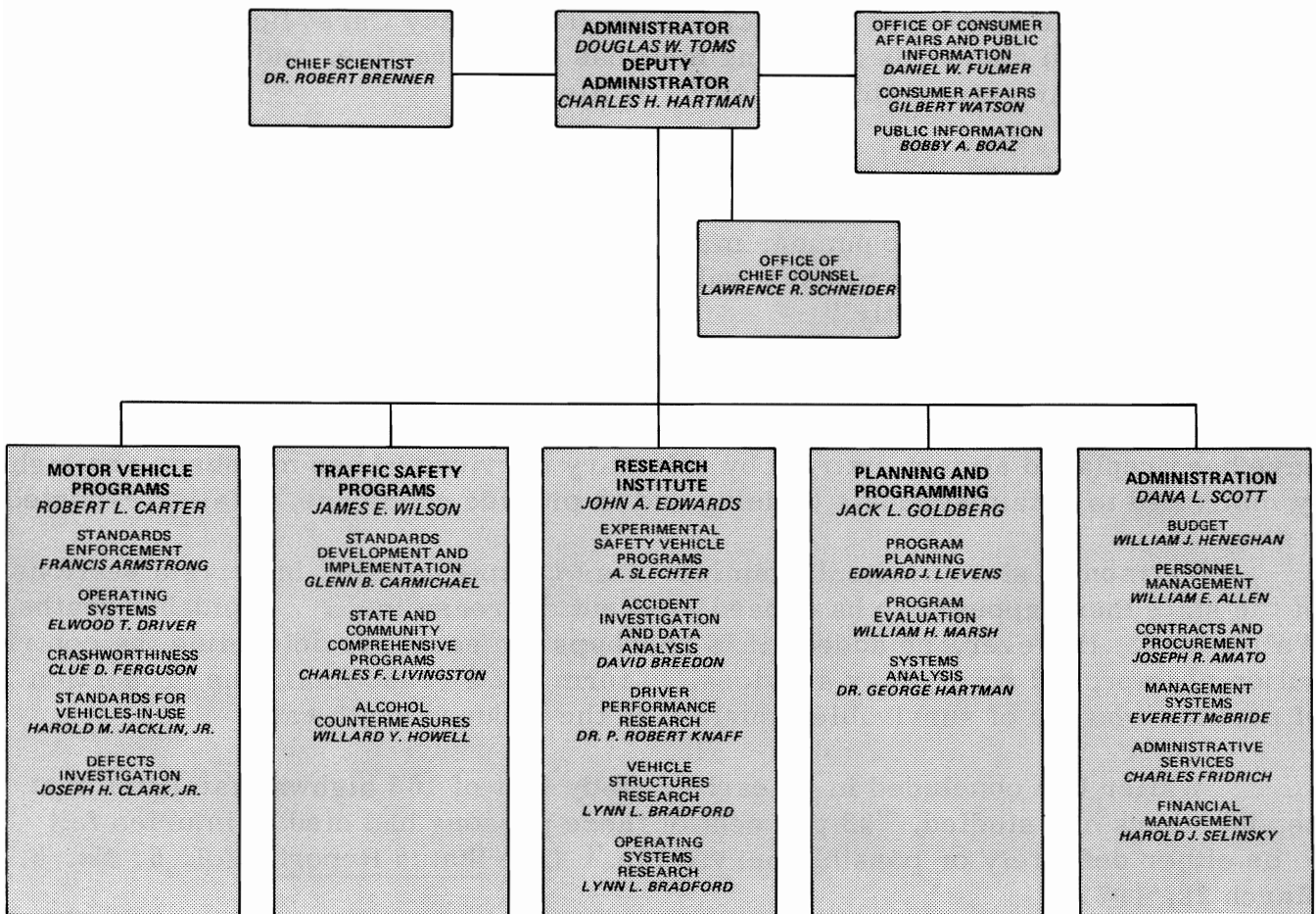
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## State Emergency Care Found Improved

Emergency medical service in Vermont recently has experienced a "very substantial improvement," according to a researcher who earlier reported that — not unlike other states — Vermont's emergency care left much to be desired.

Dr. Julian A. Waller, an epidemiologist with the Community Medicine Department of the University of Vermont, has concluded from an evaluation of ambulance service license applications that the "level of training and availability of equipment" in the state underwent "very substantial improvement" between January 1970 and January 1971.

In a paper on "Rural Emergency Care — Problems and Prospects" presented at the recent annual meeting of the American Public Health Association, Waller attributed the improvements in part to Vermont's approach to ambulance service, which "has been to seek voluntary upgrading of service, at the same time ensuring that service is available in every area of the state. With a few exceptions this approach appears to be successful."

The state requires only that each ambulance service be registered. Based on an evaluation of the level of service offered, the state issues either a "Transportation Vehicle" license or an "Emergency Care Vehicle" license. "Both services may carry out the same type of work, but the 'Emergency Care' license (which indicates that certain standards are being met) has more prestige, and the types of licenses issued are given wide publicity," Waller said.

"As of January 1970 only four of 89 services could meet these standards (for 'Emergency Care Vehicle' licenses) even with the very lenient training requirements. By August 1970 the number meeting the standards had jumped to 26, with several additional services missing only one or two of the criteria. The number continues to increase slightly."

The mortician-operated share of ambulance services available in the state has decreased from 45 per cent in 1970 to 28 per cent in 1971, he also said. "They have been replaced almost entirely by voluntary services whose members are highly motivated to obtain adequate training and to provide good care," Waller reported.

Vermont's state medical examiner "has commented that in certain sections of the state there appears to have been a recent decrease in . . . avoidable deaths," Waller said. However, he added, it is "perhaps too early" to determine the contribution of improved emergency services, in terms of a reduction in the proportion of persons who die of survivable injuries, to the reduced death rate.

Waller had concluded in an earlier study that of 163 highway fatalities that he and others had studied, "23 per cent of these persons had died of injuries felt to be either definitely or possibly survivable." (See Status Report, Vol. 6, No. 6, March 29, 1971.)



Waller said in his recent paper, "We believe that the problems in Vermont and the community response to these problems are similar to those that can be anticipated elsewhere in rural America. The Vermont experience, therefore, may be of value to others as well."

Waller's paper resulted from studies funded individually by the Department of Transportation, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, the U. S. Public Health Service and the State of Vermont.

## Reaction Split On Speed Control

Public response to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's high speed warning and control proposal is split down the middle: 52 per cent of those commenting oppose it and 48 per cent favor the proposal.

The safety administration proposal would put a built-in 95 mile per hour speed ceiling on all but police cars manufactured on or after Oct. 1, 1972. Audible and visual warnings that activate between 81 and 85 miles per hour and speedometers that register speeds no greater than 85 miles per hour are also part of the same proposal.

According to a recent issue of State Farm Insurance Companies' Public Affairs Report, "Of the 24,300 individual responses received by the NHTSA, 11,700 were in favor and 12,600 were opposed. Of those in favor, 2,950 urged lowering of the proposed maximum speed. Early responses ran heavily in favor, but the trend was reversed as 'hot-rod' and other automotive groups organized opposition."

Quoting an agency spokesman, the report said of the responses:

- Insurance companies were "completely in favor" of the proposal.
- Of 20 automakers responding, "the consensus was that they were opposed (to speed control) but that a warning system might be helpful."
- Of 10 equipment manufacturers responding, "the majority were in favor."
- "All six auto clubs responding were against both the speed limit and warning system.
- "There were 6,500 responses from women; 5,800 were in favor.
- "Most law enforcement organizations and individual policemen were in favor."

## ***Consumers To Get 'Take-Home' Information***

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has required that auto makers supply prospective buyers with "take-home" copies of consumer information on stopping distance, acceleration and passing ability and tire reserve loads if the customer requests the information.

The new requirement, which becomes effective Jan. 1, 1972, is an improvement over the current regulation, which requires only that the information be available for inspection in the dealer's showroom where, according to the safety administration, "an un-hurried and effective comparison of the safety performance features of various vehicles could be impeded by a system which permits examination of data only . . . under sales-oriented conditions."

In issuing the new rule the safety administration said it had denied a request from Chrysler Corporation "that the regulation clearly indicate that a reasonable charge can be made for the material."

## **NHTSA Taking A Look At Michigan**

Michigan had 310 fewer traffic deaths in 1970 than in 1969 and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is trying to find out why.

The safety administration has established a 6-man study group to inventory Michigan's state and community safety projects and analyze possibly associated factors such as "environmental" changes including unemployment, shifts in population and traffic patterns to determine what influence, if any, they may have had in reducing highway fatalities.

Project head W. Herdman Clark of the safety administration's Office of Traffic Safety Programs told Status Report that Michigan was chosen for evaluation because of the state's "good automated record system, " "good planning" and "expertise" available from the University of Michigan's Highway Safety Research Institute.

## **Oesch Joins Institute**

Stephen Oesch, a co-author of the recent Volkswagen Report issued by a Ralph Nader group, has joined the communications staff of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety as an investigative researcher. Formerly with the Nader-affiliated Center for Auto Safety, he is a graduate of Wooster College and is currently studying at the Georgetown University Law Center.

## **Linko Gets Award For Anti-Booby Trap Effort**

Joseph A. Linko, a Bronx, N. Y., television and radio repairman who since 1963 has conducted a personal crusade against roadside "booby traps," has received the first Annual Highway Safety award from the Home Insurance Company. The Home's annual highway safety award is part of the company's sponsorship of a nationwide program to make motorists aware of, and interested in taking constructive action against, roadside hazards.

In 1963 Linko began attempts to call official state and local attention to lethal roadside hazards with letters and photographs. Receiving no response, he wrote to the Congress about the hazards. At 1967 hearings of the House Special Subcommittee on the Federal Highway Program, chaired by Rep. John A. Blatnik (D-Minn.), Linko presented his photographs and catalog of roadside hazards. With others, his appearance resulted in efforts to improve roadside design using federal matching funds.

## **NAIA, NHTSA To Fight Drunk Driving**

The National Association of Insurance Agents has agreed to join the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in a program "to further the public's understanding of the problem and solutions available" to the menace of the abusive alcohol user who drives.

In a resolution passed at its annual convention in San Francisco the association pledged to work along with the safety administration's Office of Alcohol Countermeasures in an "exchange of information and data, the joint utilization of research findings, and the coordination of efforts on the national, state and local levels."

The association says it plans to enlist its some 150,000 members "to approach the press, local organizations and public officials" as part of a public information campaign to achieve "greater safety for the motoring public and for the general welfare of the country."

## **Tire Grading Meeting Scheduled**

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has scheduled a public meeting to take comments on its recently proposed "Uniform Tire Quality Grading" consumer information regulation. (See Status Report, Vol. 6, No. 18, Oct. 4, 1971.)

The meeting is to be held in Washington, D. C., Nov. 12, 1971, and is open to all interested parties. Persons wishing to comment on the proposal should contact Edward H. Wallace, Chief, Tire Division, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S. W., Washington, D. C. 20590.

## Annual Report Available

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has sent to the Congress its annual "Report on Activities" outlining its programs of 1970 under the Highway Safety Act of 1966 and the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966.

Copies of the two-volume report (stock numbers 5003-0041 and 5003-0042) are available for \$1.25 per volume from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402.

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