

# Status Report

## *As Reagan Takes Office*

### **Curtailed Motor Vehicle Safety Programs Urged**

The Reagan Administration is being urged to sharply curtail government efforts, mandated by the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966 and related laws, to bring about improvements in motor vehicle crashworthiness and other safety-related performance characteristics.

The suggestions have come from a Reagan "transition task force" and also from two non-governmental conservative study groups, the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute. How the incoming administration treats them will affect the lives and health of countless Americans — determining, for example, whether fewer or more people will die or be crippled in the crashes of automobiles manufactured in the future.

#### Hearings Afford Little Information

At his recent confirmation hearings before the Senate Commerce Committee, the incoming administration's designated Transportation Secretary, Andrew Lewis, Jr., shed little light on his plans concerning motor vehicle safety, other than to comment that the Department of Transportation (DOT) should "look somewhat at the cost-benefit relationship" and "let the law of diminishing returns set in where we have something ridiculous" in the way of safety or other motor vehicle standards "that essentially breaks an automotive company or breaks a consumer."

Lewis gave no examples of "ridiculous" standards. He did add, however, that although he is an "advocate" of the 55 mph speed limit, the issue should be "decided by the states" rather than the federal government. (Where they already have jurisdiction to make safety progress — such as by passing laws to require motorcycle helmet, safety belt, or child restraint use — the states have more often than not failed to enact or retain such laws.)

#### Lewis A Task Force Member

It is possibly significant that Lewis was a member of the incoming administration's transition task force responsible for recommending new policy approaches toward transportation issues. The report of the task force, which was chaired by Claude Brinegar, Secretary of Transportation in the Nixon and Ford Administrations, was written in November. Its principal conclusions as to motor vehicle and highway safety are these:

- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has "effectively exhausted its ability to increase automobile safety at reasonable social costs, although there may remain opportunities to improve the competence of drivers." Nor does it "appear that NHTSA's likely new actions would have a favorable benefit/cost ratio."

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- NHTSA's automatic restraint standard should get "early, careful study." Its "efficacy and public purpose should be considered carefully in order to avoid unjustifiable expenses by manufacturers and, in turn, consumers."
- The frequency and magnitude of auto safety defect recalls "may have passed way beyond a reasonable cost effective limit. The criteria for recalls should be examined promptly."
- Data relating the 55 mph limit to highway fatality reductions are "unclear because of changes in driving patterns and other variables"; the transition team "favors returning authority to set limits to the states."

### Conflicts In The Record

The task force conclusions in some cases are at variance with scientific evidence and the realities of motor vehicle safety progress. For instance:

- Studies by the General Accounting Office (see *Status Report*, Vol. 11, No. 14, Aug. 30, 1976), the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (see *Status Report*, Vol. 14, No. 7, April 30, 1979), and NHTSA (see *Status Report*, Vol. 15, No. 4, March 5, 1980) have indicated consistently that past motor vehicle safety standards involving little cost to consumers and auto companies have been associated with important reductions in highway crash death and injury.

- Far from being "exhausted," NHTSA's future opportunities for further reducing crash losses through low-cost or no-cost performance standards are abundant. For one example, an agency study last year indicated that reductions of more than 50 percent in rear-end impacts could be achieved through requirements for brake lights mounted on car trunks to increase their visibility (see *Status Report*, Vol. 15, No. 9, June 10, 1980). For another, no performance standard now prohibits manufacturers from placing hard, pointed control knobs and levers in areas of instrument panels that might be impacted by children's heads or adults' knees in frontal collisions – even though the cost of meeting such a standard would be minimal, as shown by the fact that some new-car designs already meet it.

(For yet another example, the required elimination of exterior protrusions – such as hazardously configured hood ornaments – from new-car exteriors not only would reduce the likelihood of injury to pedestrians and cyclists hit by the cars, it also should reduce the material and production costs of such cars and, therefore, their prices.)

- Opportunities to "improve the competence of drivers" are scarce and, when pursued, may be expensive, the best evidence has shown. Studies of programs to reduce crashes through enforcement crackdowns on "poor" drivers, identification of drunk drivers, jailing of "habitual offenders," and driver education have proved these to be of questionable effectiveness in reducing death and injury on the highway. (See the following *Status Reports*: Vol. 10, No. 9, April 28, 1975; Vol. 9, No. 14, July 8, 1974; Vol. 7, No. 10, May 22, 1972; Vol. 9, No. 19, Oct. 29, 1974; Vol. 9, No. 10, May 15, 1974.)

- NHTSA's automatic restraint standard, the "early, careful study" of which is called for by the task force, is doubtless the most carefully and thoroughly studied of any standard ever issued by the agency. Beginning with Secretary of Transportation John Volpe during the Nixon Administration and continuing through every subsequent Secretary, there has been uniform agreement that automatic restraints in new cars – particularly air bag systems – would save many thousands of lives a year and prevent hundreds of thousands of serious injuries. Were it not for the continued resistance of domestic auto companies, the standard would be in effect today. As now scheduled, it does not begin to take effect until the 1982 model year.

At this early stage in the new administration's policy development, the transition task force report represents the closest thing to an "official" view available. Unofficial recommendations from the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute, however, echo the report's call for vehicle safety cutbacks.

### The Heritage Foundation Report

The Heritage Foundation report suggests, among other steps, that the new administration do the following:

- Merge NHTSA into the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to "deemphasize the importance of NHTSA . . . ." (The report fails to note that NHTSA, once part of FHWA, was made independent of the latter by the Nixon Administration so as to strengthen its role.) Or, if this is "politically" difficult, choose the "proper person" to head NHTSA – one that would avoid "past unfortunate experiences."

- Base future policy decisions on the premise that NHTSA's past safety and fuel economy rules may have caused "in large part, the financial problems which domestic manufacturers such as Chrysler and Ford have recently encountered."

- Require NHTSA to have "real-world experience rather than just from laboratory testing" in support of proposed safety standards. (NHTSA's basis for its automatic restraint standard has included a huge amount of real-world evidence involving both air bag-equipped and automatic belt-equipped cars.)

- Require NHTSA to "support" standards proposals with "publicly available documentation at the earliest stage possible," including "cost-benefit evaluations of the proposal and alternatives." (NHTSA by law must issue performance, not design, standards; cost-benefit evaluations apply to specific design approaches, the choice of which is controlled by the manufacturer. See *Status Report*, Vol. 9, No. 19, Oct. 29, 1974.)

- Base future safety defect determinations on "collected traffic data" rather than consumer complaints. (Both are now employed by NHTSA in defect investigations.)

- Use cost-benefit analyses in defect cases.

The report also recommends that NHTSA's data-gathering programs, including the National Accident Sampling System, be expanded and moved "totally outside NHTSA, perhaps as a unit within DOT which would gather data for both NHTSA and the FHWA."

The American Enterprise Institute's recommendations appear in the November-December 1980 issue of its *Journal on Government and Society*, under the title: "Advice for the President-Elect." They urge abandonment of both NHTSA's automatic restraint standard and its bumper damageability standard, which has been in full effect for new cars since the fall of 1979.

## **NHTSA Proposes Anchorages For Child Restraints**

Vehicles with automatic restraints in the right front seat would be required to have anchorages allowing the installation of lap belts – but not the belts themselves – under a rule proposed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The proposed rule is intended to "ensure that child restraint systems can be easily and properly secured" in such vehicles, NHTSA said.

Citing the same reason, the agency also proposed that all vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of  
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under 10,000 pounds have anchorage hardware in all rear seats for the tether straps that come with many child restraints.

Requirements for restraints such as air bags and automatic seat belts for front-seat occupants are scheduled to begin taking effect with 1982-model cars. Explaining the need for lap belt installation points, NHTSA said that while the vast majority of vehicles equipped with air bags will have lap belts, vehicles with some automatic belt designs may not have them in the front seat and so may not allow child restraints to be secured. For example, the automatic belt now used in the Deluxe Volkswagen Rabbit can't be used to secure a child restraint, it said.

### Physicians, Institute Urge Belt Requirement

To avoid consumers having to make installations, the Physicians for Automotive Safety and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, among other groups, have urged NHTSA to go a step farther and require lap belts themselves for all seating positions in vehicles equipped with automatic restraints. But NHTSA has tentatively concluded that lap belt anchorages "should be sufficient." However, it is seeking public comment on the issue.

NHTSA said that nearly 70 percent of all child restraint systems used in the U.S. are equipped with tether straps, which must be fastened to properly anchor the systems to the vehicle. But, the agency noted, installing tether anchorages for rear seats can be quite difficult and expensive for consumers, and the straps are often left unattached. To promote proper restraint use, NHTSA proposed that anchorage hardware be required.

In its notice, the agency also is seeking public comment on whether to give manufacturers the option of drilling holes for the installation of tether anchorages, instead of installing the anchorage hardware. In vehicles in which the holes, in the absence of anchorage hardware, could allow exhaust fumes to seep into the occupant compartment, NHTSA may – if it finds the vehicle design is appropriate – only require an indentation showing where the holes should be drilled, rather than the holes themselves.

The agency also has proposed strength and location requirements for both the lap belt and tether anchorages.

Comments on the proposals, which would amend Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 210 and take effect with 1982 models, should refer to Docket No. 80-18; Notice 1, and be submitted to Docket Section, Room 5108, Nassif building, 400 Seventh St. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. The closing date for comments is Feb. 9, 1981.

## **Panel Urges Action To Reduce Highway Deaths Of Children**

Accidents, especially motor vehicle crashes, are the leading cause of death and disability among American children and adolescents. The nation should make a major new effort to prevent accidental injuries of children, and evidence suggests that the best approach in many instances is to minimize environmental hazards rather than to concentrate on attempting to promote safer behavior.

These are among the findings of a panel created by Congress to assess the status of child and maternal health in the U.S. Made up of private citizens and public officials, most of them from the Department of Health and Human Services (formerly part of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare), the panel also was charged with developing the nation's first comprehensive plan to promote the health of children and pregnant women.

### Second Only To Canada

“The U.S. is second only to Canada among ten Western industrialized nations in its rate of accidental deaths among children,” the panel reported. With respect to motor vehicle crashes, it commented that the facts “are grim indeed,” and if “reported from some distant battlefield, would make the country sit up and take notice.”

“Fully one-fifth of all child deaths can be attributed to automobile accidents each year, including the deaths of more than 1,000 children who are under age five,” according to the panel. “Teenagers have the highest motor vehicle death rate of any group, accounting for 20 percent of all motor vehicle deaths in 1978.” The panel said that more than “46,000 1-4 year-olds are seriously injured in auto accidents each year.” Motor vehicle crashes “account for more than half of all serious accidents experienced by children,” it added.

The members called for a “major new national accident prevention strategy” involving “strong participation by private industry, citizen groups, the media, and government.” They said evidence suggests that “many kinds of injuries and health problems can be more economically and effectively reduced by changing the environments in which people live, work and play, than by trying to change behavior directly. Thus, for example, safer automobile construction and better passive [automatic] restraint systems in automobiles may be more effective than increased expenditures on driver education.”

### Safety Moves Recommended

As an “absolute minimum,” they urged the following steps in the area of motor vehicle safety:

- Efforts by health workers, community groups, car dealers, and insurance companies to promote child restraint use.
- Further efforts by manufacturers to develop inexpensive, effective child restraints, which “should be routinely available from auto dealers as an option for new car buyers.”

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## ***Second Child Restraint Announcement Available***

“Saving a Child’s Life” is the second of two 30-second public service announcements on child restraints produced for television by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. It is being distributed this week to the top 100 TV markets in the country and to all English-speaking TV stations in Canada.

Conveying the message, “The automobile . . . the number one killer of kids,” the new announcement focuses on the dangers of children of any age riding in a car unrestrained. The first of the two TV announcements, released in November, dealt with restraints for infants. (See *Status Report*, Vol. 15, No. 16, Nov. 5, 1980.)

A limited number of two-inch videotapes of the announcement are available for local TV use. For further information, write “Saving a Child’s Life,” Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Watergate 600, Washington, D.C. 20037, or call 202-333-0770.

- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) should resist further delay in the deadlines for equipping all new cars with automatic restraints such as air bags or automatic seat belts. NHTSA also should require auto makers to adopt proven but unused safety technology – including features demonstrated in the Research Safety Vehicle program – if they don't do so voluntarily within five years, the panel said (see *Status Report*, Vol. 15, No. 16, Nov. 5, 1980). In addition, it should intensify efforts to develop special performance standards for child passenger safety.

- State adoption of laws requiring the use of child restraints, if such legislation now in effect proves to have positive effects. (According to research by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, use rates climbed to 29 percent from 8 percent after Tennessee adopted a mandatory use law. See *Status Report*, Vol. 15, No. 10, June 25, 1980.) States also should vigorously enforce the national 55 mph speed limit; require motorcycle riders to wear helmets; require licensing and helmet use for moped and minibike operators; require car rental and leasing agencies to make child restraints available without charge; and initiate bumper sticker and other media campaigns emphasizing the importance of child restraint use.

## Ford Owners To Get Automatic Transmission Warnings

Ford Motor Company and Transportation Secretary Neil Goldschmidt have reached a settlement averting what would have been the largest recall in history. Instead, the manufacturer will send letters to owners of all Ford vehicles built between 1970 and 1979 and equipped with automatic transmissions, notifying them that the transmission may be hazardous and enclosing a warning label to be placed on the dashboard.

The agreement was immediately attacked by Ralph Nader and the Center for Auto Safety, which had petitioned for the defect investigation and recall.

In reaching the settlement, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) did not withdraw its June 9 initial finding that all automatic transmissions in Ford vehicles built between 1970 and 1979 contain one or two design errors which could permit them to suddenly jump from “park” into “reverse” when the engine is left idling. (See *Status Report*, Vol. 15, No. 10, June 25, 1980.) The safety agency estimates approximately 22.9 million Ford vehicles contain the potentially hazardous transmissions. The agency had not made a final determination before Goldschmidt made the decision to enter into the agreement with Ford.

More deaths and injuries have been attributed to the alleged defect than for any other defect ever investigated, a NHTSA spokesman told *Status Report*. The Center for Auto Safety has reported a total of 133 deaths, while the safety agency said it has received over 23,000 complaints of spontaneous shifting and more than 1,700 nonfatal injuries allegedly caused by the defect.

In a letter to Goldschmidt outlining the terms of the agreement, Herbert L. Misch, Ford vice president, said the company “remains convinced that [NHTSA’S] initial defect determination in this case is unjustified.” Misch said that driver error was responsible for the incidents. Inadvertent shifting could be avoided, Misch said, by observing “. . . three common sense steps to make sure the vehicle is securely immobilized. These steps are: 1) properly engaging the transmission system in ‘Park’, 2) setting the parking brake, and 3) shutting off the engine.”

Both the warning labels and notification letters will contain that advice.

Clarence Ditlow, Center for Auto Safety director, denounced the settlement, calling it both “illegal

and a farce.” The law requires that vehicles found to contain defects must be recalled for either repair, replacement, or a refund, and the Center is considering filing a lawsuit.

Ditlow also announced the formation of a coalition of “accident” survivors and parents of the defect’s victims and pointed out, “Its victims are the old and very young, those least able to scramble out of the way of these killer Fords when they jump from park into reverse. Over 80 percent of the victims were 50 or older or less than 10 years old.” Ditlow predicted the warning label will not prevent future deaths.

## **Ford World Car, Chrysler K-Cars Rated For Crashworthiness**

Ford’s 1981 Escort/Lynx and Chrysler’s K-cars have failed to provide adequate occupant protection in the federal government’s 35 mph frontal crash tests, but neither car leaked fuel when struck from the rear by a 4,000 lb. barrier moving at 35 mph.

The crash tests, conducted at speeds of 35 mph, 5 mph above current requirements, are part of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s (NHTSA) on going crashworthiness program ordered by Congress to give consumers information on the relative safety of new cars. (See *Status Report*, Vol. 15, No. 14, Sept. 17, 1980.)

Beginning with 1982 model large cars, manufacturers will be required to provide front seat occupants automatic protection from serious injury in frontal crashes of up to 30 mph. Currently, certain individual components, such as the steering wheel assembly and the fuel tank assembly, must meet a 30 mph standard.

NHTSA said the Ford Escort/Lynx “performed better than most other subcompacts” in the frontal crash tests, with the driver well-protected by both the seat belt and the collapsible steering column. The passenger dummy registered a “borderline failure when its head contacted the instrument panel, registering an impact that might have killed a human. A head injury criterion (HIC) rating of 1,000 is considered to be the outer limit of “passing.” The Escort’s driver registered a HIC of 618, while the passenger dummy measured the blow at 1,011.

The Chrysler K-cars – Plymouth Aries and Dodge Reliant – provided “relatively good structural and belt performance,” NHTSA reported. But the passenger dummy’s head struck the edge of the dashboard twice, registering a lethal HIC of 1,702, while the driver sustained a HIC of only 606. The reason for the severity of the impact, NHTSA said, was that the instrument panel was pushed rearward and up during the crash and the edge of the dash was struck. In addition, “the passenger shoulder harness spooled out more than it should have,” NHTSA reported.

## **Vehicle Crashes Leading Cause Of Job-Related Deaths**

Motor vehicle crashes in 1978 and 1979 were the leading cause of job-related deaths in private industry, the Bureau of Labor Statistics has reported.

Based on a sample survey of employers having 11 or more employees, car and truck crashes accounted for 28 percent of the 9,540 job-related deaths in those years, the bureau said. Other leading causes were heart attacks, industrial vehicles or equipment, and falls, each of which accounted for 10 percent of the deaths.

## **Huge Demand Found For 'The Car Book'**

After an early flood of requests quickly exhausted the initial printing of 500,000 copies of "The Car Book," the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has gone to a second printing of 1,250,000 copies of the book.

"The Car Book," described by its publishers as a "Consumer's Guide to Car Buying," is a colorful 68-page publication that contains safety and performance information designed to be helpful in buying either a new or used car. It deals with maintenance costs, fuel economy, insurance problems, and defects and recalls, but is especially noteworthy for its report of how individual cars performed in crash tests staged by NHTSA.

Most of the crash test results, produced in frontal barrier impacts at 35 mph, or 5 miles in excess of the current crash test requirements, have been reported before (see *Status Report*, Vol. 15, No. 14, Sept. 17, 1980). However, results of eight additional tests are included in "The Car Book," with only three of them being "passing" grades. The intermediate Ford Thunderbird and the standard-sized Dodge Mirada and Cadillac Seville were judged to have passed the test of offering occupant protection in the 35 mph crash. Those marked "failed" are: the minicompact Renault LeCar; the compacts/intermediates Peugeot 504D, Mercedes Benz 240 D, and Oldsmobile Cutlass V-8; and the standard-sized Chrysler LeBaron.

While the Renault LeCar was judged to have excessive rearward displacement of the steering column and the Peugeot 504D was found to have inadequate crash energy management of the structural design, most of the cars that "failed" were found deficient in that their seat belts allowed excessive forward movement of the passengers.

Although the book was immediately criticized by spokesmen from the auto industry, the swift and heavy public response to its publication indicated a huge public interest in auto crashworthiness and safety, and in the obvious differences among various models.

A free copy of "The Car Book" may be obtained by writing to The Car Book, Pueblo, Colo. 81009.

## **Highway Sign Posts Cause Small-Car Rollovers**

Although they haven't posed a stability hazard to large cars, certain widely-used supports for small highway signs can cause small cars to overturn in a crash, government tests indicate. They also show that the same supports built with inexpensive "breakaway" features can minimize the hazard.

Sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the tests were part of a study carried out at the Texas Transportation Institute to learn what crash hazards are posed by supports for small highway signs as consumers increasingly take to the roads in small cars.

In three tests indicating a rollover hazard, subcompact Chevrolet Vegas were crashed into single supports for small highway signs at approximately 60 mph. The study said that in one of the tests, a Vega rolled over three times and was a "total loss" after it was crashed into a post made of steel piping 2½ inches in diameter. In a national survey of state, county, and city transportation agencies, respondents reported that about 25 percent of the small signs in their jurisdictions were supported by posts of this kind, the study said.



Another test car nearly rolled over after it was crashed into a U-shaped post made of thin metal, the study said. Transportation agencies reported that about 34 percent of their small sign supports were of this variety. A Vega rolled over twice after it was crashed into a support consisting of two U-posts fastened back-to-back, according to the study. The agencies said roughly one percent of their signs were of this type.

### No Rollovers With Breakaway Designs

The same three post designs, but with breakaway features allowing them to more easily be knocked out of the way in a crash, also were tested at approximately 60 mph. No rollovers were reported in these tests.

In late 1977, FHWA ruled that the hazardous steel pipe and double U-post designs could no longer be installed without acceptable breakaway features on federal-aid routes. However, the action did not require any retrofitting of existing installations, a FHWA spokesman said.

Although there was no penetration into the occupant compartment by the signs or by vehicle parts such as the hood, the windshield was damaged, sometimes heavily, in 10 of the 22 test impacts conducted for the study. "In most cases breakage resulted from the panel and post rotating into the windshield," the researchers said. They concluded that the possibility of penetration can be minimized by "adequately attaching the panel to the post."

Copies of the study, "Crash Tests of Small Highway Sign Supports," Report No. FHWA/RD-80/502, May 1980, may be obtained through the National Technical Information Service, Springfield, Va. 22161.

## **New Chairman Named For Institute Directors**

Charles A. Weeber, staff vice president with the United Services Automobile Association, has been elected chairman of the board of directors of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). James L. Colopy, vice president for the Hartford Insurance Group, has been named as a new member of the board.

Other IIHS board members are Donald P. McHugh, vice president and general counsel, State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co.; J. Dean Cassidy, senior vice president, Continental Insurance Companies; Martin Albaum, vice president, Prudential Property and Casualty Insurance Co.; George G. P. Knapp, senior vice president, Chubb & Son, Inc.; Frank E. Walton, executive vice president, Travelers Insurance Companies; T. Lawrence Jones, president, American Insurance Association; M. Stanley Hughey, executive vice president, Kemper Insurance Companies; Allen L. Cudworth, vice president and director of the research center, Liberty Mutual Insurance Co.; W. J. Smith, vice president, Wausau Underwriters Insurance Co.; Paul S. Wise, president, Alliance of American Insurers; Donald L. Schaffer, vice president, secretary, and general counsel, Allstate Insurance Co.; W. V. Siegfried, vice president, Nationwide Mutual Insurance Co.; and Arthur C. Mertz, president, National Association of Independent Insurers.

The newly-elected chairman of the board of directors of the Highway Loss Data Institute (HLDI) is Martin Albaum, vice president, Prudential Property and Casualty Insurance Co. Gary L. Countryman, vice president and director of corporate research, Liberty Mutual Insurance Co., is a new member of the HLDI board.

Fellow members are Wayne W. Sorenson, vice president, State Farm Insurance Companies, and Albaum's predecessor; Charles A. Bryan, vice president and actuary, United Services Automobile Association; M. Stanley Hughey, executive vice president, Kemper Insurance Companies; Marvin Johnson, associate actuary, Nationwide Insurance Co.; Joseph M. Matejek, assistant vice president, Aetna Life and Casualty; Donald Messmer, assistant vice president, Government Employees Insurance Co.; John S. Trees, group vice president, Allstate Insurance Co.; Frank E. Walton, executive vice president, Travelers Insurance Companies; and William Haddon, Jr., president of HLDI.

## **FAA Proposes Rules For Child Restraints In Planes**

After many years of delay, rules clearing the way for the use of child restraints in commercial and other aircraft have been proposed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Although the need to provide proper protection for infants and young children has been recognized, the FAA hasn't yet allowed child restraints because it hasn't decided which ones are suitable for use in aircraft. A recent General Accounting Office study said that the agency has conducted research on child and infant restraints since the early 1960's, but has failed to follow through on projects to specify those that would be suitable (see *Status Report*, Vol. 15, No. 9, June 10, 1980).

With some modifications, the proposed rules would require that the restraints comply with the recently upgraded Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 213, which specifies minimum protection to be provided in a simulated frontal crash of an automobile at 30 mph (see *Status Report*, Vol. 14, No. 18, Dec. 21, 1979). In addition, the restraints would have to be able to hold a child-sized dummy in place under test conditions simulating in-flight turbulence and withstand a specified level of force generated by an unlatched seatback, among other requirements.

Instead of the applicable FMVSS 213 provisions, the restraints would have to meet separate FAA requirements for fire resistance, according to a FAA spokesman. He also said that supplemental tether straps could not be used to anchor the restraints, and that they would have to meet 30 mph crash test requirements of FMVSS 213 without them.

Copies of the proposed rules, "Technical Standard Order (TSO) C100," may be obtained from William L. Olson, Systems Branch, Aircraft Engineering Division, Office of Airworthiness, Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20591. The rules refer to FMVSS 213, copies of which may be obtained from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Docket Section, Room 5108, 400 Seventh St., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590.

## **Uniform Approach To Driver Licensing, Revocation Urged**

The federal government should devise a model comprehensive driver licensing and revocation program to be used by all states on a cooperative basis, the National Highway Safety Advisory Committee has recommended.

In a study of criteria used by the states to qualify automobile drivers, revoke licenses, identify problem drivers, and record violations and crashes in driver records, the committee said it "found much diversity." In a letter to the Secretary of Transportation, Sheila Sidles, committee chairman, added that the committee "found little to substantiate that any of the criteria in use was effective or cost beneficial."

"The committee learned that interstate cooperation in these matters is deplorable," said Sidles, "considering the availability of the technical means to communicate almost instantaneously, the mobility of the population among the states, and the adverse safety implications."

The report said while it would be a mistake to discard the programs because their cost benefits had not been evaluated, it recommended that the Department of Transportation (DOT) begin evaluating them to

determine the most effective approaches. The committee also urged reform of the National Driver Register (see *Status Report*, Vol. 15, No. 14, Sept. 17, 1980) along with the development of a model driver licensing program. It also urged DOT to “mount a major effort” to get the states to adopt a uniform approach, once it is developed, along with complete interstate cooperation in sharing information.

## **Survey Finds Motorcyclists Largest Users Of Hospital Services**

Motorcyclists involved in crashes required more hospital care per person than any other major group of injured patients, researchers reported in a study of the use of resources at a British hospital.

The study, published in the November 1980 issue of *The Journal of Trauma*, analyzed the resource requirements of 200 patients admitted to the accident unit at the British Royal Infirmary in 1976 in Bristol, England. Resource use was assessed for 12 categories of injured patients. The resources considered were X rays, laboratory services, operating facilities, and nursing and institutional care – defined as “all aspects of nursing, technical, administrative, ancillary, and medical care.”

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# Status Report

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