



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

NOV 30 2004

NVS-216aae
Ref. #10083717

Troy, OH

Dear

Thank you for your correspondence dated June 4, 2004, requesting reimbursement for costs you incurred to replace Firestone Steelix tires that were installed on your 2003 GMC K2500 truck. Your correspondence was received on July 23, 2004. Due to limited resources we were not able to respond to you in a more timely manner. We regret any inconvenience our delay may have caused you.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is the Federal agency responsible for improving safety on our Nation's highways. We are authorized to order manufacturers to recall and repair vehicles or items of motor vehicle equipment when our investigations indicate that they contain serious safety defects in their design, construction, or performance. We also monitor the adequacy of manufacturers' recall campaigns. In order for the agency to initiate an investigation, we look carefully at the body of consumer complaints and other available data to determine whether a defect may exist. We cannot act on isolated problems or resolve disputes between individual owners, dealers, or manufacturers.

We appreciate the report you provided. Reports from motorists are a very important source of information for us. Each report is analyzed and entered into a database to determine whether an investigation into a possible safety defect is warranted.

NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) closed an investigation (PE00-040) into tire failures involving Firestone Steelix R4S, R4S II, and A/T light truck radial tires on April 9, 2002. A copy of the resume and closing report for this investigation are enclosed for your information. In November 2002, the Law Offices of Lisoni & Lisoni and the Law Offices of Steven E. Weinberger petitioned NHTSA to reopen its investigation (DP02-011). On June 16, 2003, ODI denied that petition after conducting a thorough analysis of information submitted in support of the petition, data in our own database, and information obtained from Bridgestone/Firestone, Inc. (Firestone). The petition resume and the analysis presented in the Federal Register notice regarding the denial of that petition are also enclosed for your information.

On May 12, 2004, ODI received two additional petitions from the Law Offices of Lisoni & Lisoni. In the first petition (DP04-004), the petitioner requested that NHTSA reopen its



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888-DASH-2-DOT
888-327-4236

previous defect investigation into all Firestone Steeltex light truck radial tires. In the second petition (DP04-005), the petitioner requested that NHTSA open an investigation into Steeltex tires used on ambulance and emergency response vehicles. On September 28, 2004, ODI denied both petitions after conducting a thorough analysis of information submitted in support of the petition, data in our own database, and updated information obtained from Firestone. The petition resumes and the analysis presented in the Federal Register notice regarding the denial of these petitions are also enclosed for your information.

We sympathize with you concerning your request for reimbursement; however, this does not fall under our jurisdiction. If you have not done so, you may consider contacting your local Consumer Protection Agency, Better Business Bureau, or the Ohio Office of the Attorney General regarding your problem.

You can contact our toll-free DOT Auto Safety Hotline (Hotline) at 1-888-DASH-2-DOT (1-888-327-4236). One of our representatives may be able to assist you on matters concerning motor vehicle and motor vehicle equipment safety recalls or to report an alleged safety problem. You can also request safety information. If our telephones are busy, or you call during non-working hours, you can leave your name, telephone number, and a brief subject on our recording system. A DOT Hotline representative will return your call.

Additionally, we have an Internet Web site at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov> that you may want to visit. An electronic Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ) is also available on this Web site at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/ivoq>. This form is for vehicle owners to report safety related problems about their motor vehicles or motor vehicle equipment, e.g., child safety seats, jacks, tires, brake fluid, etc. The reports submitted are transferred to our database and are used to identify safety-related defect trends that require our attention. If you do not have access to the Internet, please use the enclosed VOQ to inform this agency of any future motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment safety problems you may experience. Also, a summary listing of vehicle owners' complaints, safety recalls, manufacturers' service bulletins, etc., can be obtained at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems>.

If further assistance is needed, please contact Mr. Michael J. Jordan, Safety Defects Program Assistant, Correspondence Research Division, Office of Defects Investigation, at (202) 493-0576.

Sincerely,



Alberto A. Jimenez, Chief
Correspondence Research Division
Office of Defects Investigation
Enforcement

Enclosures