



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

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10087034

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

MAY 3 2005

██████████
██████████
Colorado Springs, CO ██████████
██████████

Dear ██████████:

Thank you for your e-mail dated April 25, 2005, concerning a problem you encountered with the parking brake system in a model year (MY) 2001 GMC Yukon XL vehicle, which resulted in the death of your daughter, ██████████. We are sorry for your loss and extend our deepest sympathies to you and your family.

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 this report and the reports you submitted while visiting NHTSA's Internet Web site on August 17, 2004, and October 30, 2004. 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 is aware of the General Motors Corporation's (GM) Technical Service Bulletins (TSB) concerning the parking brake system in certain MY 1998 through 2005 GM vehicles, including the MY 2001 GMC Yukon. However, the issuance of a TSB does not necessarily reflect the existence of a safety-related defect in accordance with the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act. Therefore, NHTSA does not have the authority to require that motor vehicle manufacturers conduct owner notification programs concerning the issuance of TSBs.

As you are already aware, on December 8, 2003, NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) opened a safety defect investigation (PE03-057) into reports alleging ineffectiveness of



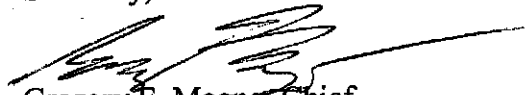
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the parking brake in MY 1999 through 2003 GM Silverado and Sierra vehicles equipped with manual transmissions. On April 9, 2004, ODI upgraded PE03-057 to an engineering analysis (EA04-011), which is a more detailed and complete technical analysis of the character and scope of an alleged defect. On April 20, 2005, GM notified NHTSA that it would conduct a safety recall (NHTSA Campaign No. 05V-161) to remedy a defect found to exist in the parking brake system of MY 1999 through 2002 GM Silverado 1500 and Sierra 1500 vehicles equipped with manual transmissions. Documentation concerning ODI's investigations and GM's safety recall can be obtained from NHTSA's Internet Web site at <http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/home.cfm>.

During the course of ODI's investigation, we conducted an extensive study of MY 1999 through 2003 GM vehicles, including MY 2001 GMC Yukon vehicles, and found that the vehicles subject to GM's safety recall (i.e., vehicles equipped with manual transmissions) experienced more than fifty times the roll-away rate than those vehicles equipped with automatic transmissions. Additionally, we examined GM vehicles equipped with automatic transmissions and found that these vehicles experienced a similar roll-away rate compared to peer vehicles manufactured by Ford Motor Company and DaimlerChrysler Corporation, which do not have any known parking brake problems at this time. Because of these findings, we are unable to request that GM expand the scope of its safety recall to include vehicles equipped with automatic transmissions. While we continue to receive complaints of worn out parking brakes on such vehicles, the vast majority of these reports do not report a roll-away event and instead cite discontent over the costs incurred to repair parking brake systems that are rarely used. Therefore, these complaints do not provide a basis on which to request a safety recall.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 366-5226.

Sincerely,



Gregory E. Magno, Chief
Defects Assessment Division
Office of Defects Investigation
Enforcement