



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

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

MAR 08 2005

NVS-216 mec
Ref. # 10096793

[REDACTED]
Ellensburg, WA [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]:

Thank you for your correspondence dated September 5, 2004, concerning the problems you have encountered with Firestone Steeltex R4S tires. The Washington Office of the Attorney General forwarded your correspondence to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for a response. It was received on October 6, 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.

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. 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 help us 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 Steeltex 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.



DOT AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE
888-DASH-2-DOT
888-327-4236

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 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.

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