



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

Administrator

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

JAN 12 2005

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator
230 South Dearborn Street, Suite 3892
Chicago, IL 60604

NVS-216 mjj
Ref. # 10105561

Dear Senator Durbin:

Thank you for your correspondence dated December 1, 2004, on behalf of your constituents, Mr. and Mrs. [REDACTED]. Mr. and Mrs. [REDACTED] wrote concerning a problem they encountered with the inadvertent deployment of the passenger's side-impact air bag installed in their model year (MY) 2002 Volkswagen Golf GTI vehicle. Your correspondence was received on December 27, 2004.

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 greatly appreciate the report you provided on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. [REDACTED] the report [REDACTED] submitted while visiting NHTSA's Internet Web site on November 23, 2004, and the report [REDACTED] filed with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Auto Safety Hotline on December 3, 2004. 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.

On December 16, 2004, NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation opened a safety defect investigation (PE04-081) into reports alleging inadvertent deployment of the side air bag system in MY 2001 through 2003 Volkswagen Jetta, Golf, and GTI vehicles. For your information, I have enclosed a copy of the opening resume for PE04-081. The investigation is continuing; however, no determinations have been reached at this time.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions, please contact
Mr. Ronald L. Medford, Senior Associate Administrator for Vehicle Safety, at (202) 366-1810.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Runge', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeffrey W. Runge, M.D.

Enclosure

cc: Washington Office