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Independence, MO

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Chevrolet Motor Division
Chevrolet Customer Assistance Center
P.O. Box 33170
Detroit, MI 48232-5170

November 21, 2005

Dear Sirs,

I am writing in reference to a complaint of a safety concern I had occur to my 2001 Suburban in September of 2005. I spoke to Robbie and the complaint number is 1-358564104. My Suburban VIN is: 3GNGK26G41G1. The problem is basically that the rear frame rails broke off my Suburban. The two rear body mount bolts were all that kept my trailer from disconnecting from the vehicle.

I have a show car. A 1972 Hurst/Oldsmobile that I purchased new. It has always been a show car with only 22,800 actual miles. The car is original but heavily detailed. We have traveled the middle western United States every summer for the past ten years competing in auto shows. We have currently won over 600 awards from 300 towns spanning eleven states. The Oldsmobile Club of America believes this is the most winning Oldsmobile ever. I am telling you this to emphasize the importance of what I nearly lost.

I ordered my 3/4 ton 2001 Suburban as a tow vehicle. I got the 8.1 liter engine and the 4.10 differential gear. I also purchased the 100,000 mile extended warranty. I paid \$47,000.00 cash (not financed) for the purchase. Suburbans are usually advertised pulling a horse trailer. I pull a 24 foot Haulmark enclosed car trailer that fully loaded weighs 11,000 pounds. Your specifications say the Suburban will pull 12,000 pounds. I use the best Draw-Tite equalizer hitch made. My Suburban now has 70,000 miles on it and most of that has been towing. I realize that most people don't tow as much as I do, so I have put quite a test on the equipment. Unfortunately, the rear section of your frame is the weak link.

Your frame is virtually three sections connected to make the entire frame. Your front section is tall rail and boxed. The middle section is tall rail. The rear section is short rail, and not boxed. You have thinned the metal in the rear section to such a degree that it has to be the thinnest in any truck made. I viewed other frames at the frame shop: a Ford pickup frame, a Dodge pickup frame and even older Chevrolet pickup frames. All were made of a much thicker metal and they were half-ton models. Then just forward of where the hitch connects to the frame, the highest stress point of an equalizer hitch, you placed a three inch hole in the frame on both sides. What were your engineers thinking? It was just a matter of time until the frame cracked above and below the hole and then worked back and forth until it severed. This is what happened with my vehicle. My emergency breakaway switch is connected from the trailer to the hitch on the Suburban. If the complete bumper and hitch come off there is nothing to activate my emergency brakes on my trailer. It will just roll until it hits something. This very dangerous situation will not only destroy property it will injure or kill people.

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I am told that this frame is used in newer 3/4 ton Suburban and 3/4 ton GMC equivalent models. I believe it is also used in some Cadillac SUV models.

I had to replace the entire frame in my Suburban. I also had to beef up the new frame with extra metal plate to ensure it would not break again. This cost more than \$5,000.00 . Your company decided that since my vehicle was out of the original factory warranty period and paid for in cash you could wash your hands of the matter and give me no assistance what-so-ever. Do you believe I will not think of this when I purchase my next vehicle? Now that my vehicle is repaired do you think the matter is closed? Not for a minute! You have buried your head in the sand concerning this but it will come back to haunt you. The next time this happens to someone and maybe someone is injured or killed, I will be there with this letter and record to testify that you were aware of the problem and potential consequences and chose to do nothing. It will cost you millions of dollars down the road and my \$5,000.00 expense will look like a bargain in retrospect.

A copy of this letter is being sent to The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Something needs to be done before someone dies.

Sincerely,

