



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

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

AUG 11 2006

NVS-216aae
Ref. # 10162633

[REDACTED]
Arnold, CA [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your correspondence dated June 25, 2006, concerning your model year (MY) 2004 Subaru Outback. Your correspondence was received on July 10, 2006. We regret any inconvenience our delay in responding 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.

A review of our complaint database relative to sudden uncontrolled acceleration in MY 2004 Subaru Outback vehicles, which you described, revealed insufficient evidence to warrant opening a safety defect investigation at this time. The information you provided has been entered into our database. It will be considered with other reports to identify any safety defect trends that may require our attention.

Our recall file indicates that there are two recalls on the 2004 Subaru Outback summaries enclosed. NHTSA recall campaign No. 04V-12800 concerns the cruise control cable; however, it does not relate to the problem you described. Please contact Subaru at the telephone number provided in the recall summary to determine if your vehicle remains among those requiring corrective action.

Each manufacturer designs its vehicles so the air bags will deploy if the severity of a crash exceeds a certain threshold. However, there is no Federal requirement establishing a



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

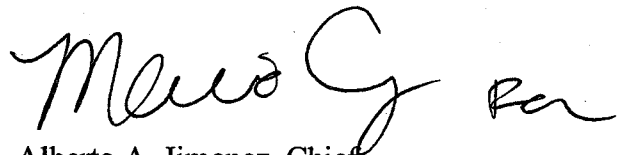
particular threshold. Most manufacturers design their air bags to deploy when the crash severity is in the range of an 8 to 14 mph crash into a fixed solid barrier. This severity is about the same as a crash into another vehicle of equivalent weight at 16 to 28 mph. In lower speed crashes, where the air bag does not deploy, occupant protection is provided by the design of the interior surfaces in the vehicle, as well as by the safety belts provided at each seating position.

A number of factors, other than crash severity, can affect whether an air bag will deploy in a given crash; e.g., the angle of impact, the speed of the other vehicle, and the amount of force absorbed by the other vehicle or object that is impacted. Only an expert in crash reconstruction can provide an educated opinion as to whether the air bag in a vehicle should have deployed in a specific crash.

You can contact our toll-free NHTSA Vehicle 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 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>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Alberto A. Jimenez", followed by a small, stylized mark that looks like "Per".

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

Enclosure