



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration**

March 27, 2009

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE.  
Washington, DC 20590

[REDACTED]  
Tacoma, WA [REDACTED]

Ref. # 10262309  
NVS-216 nlm

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your correspondence dated February 4, 2009, concerning Dometic refrigerator in your Forest River motorhome. The Illinois Office of the Attorney General forwarded your correspondence to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Office of Defects Investigation (ODI). Your correspondence was received on March 11, 2009.

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 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. In your letter, you question the adequacy of Dometic's remedy under NHTSA safety recall 08V-346. Refrigerant leaking from the boiler tube of the affected refrigerator will result in an inoperative unit. This is not a safety related consequence within the meaning of our authorizing statute. Under certain conditions, refrigerant leakage could result in a fire which is certainly an undesirable safety-related event. Dometic has determined that the risk of a vehicle fire can be mitigated by the installation of a secondary burner housing. While this does not address the frustration customers feel at the loss of their refrigerator function, NHTSA has found no evidence to suggest that this is not a reasonable remedy to address the risk of a vehicle fire. Since the refrigerant has already leaked out of your unit the fire risk has passed without incident.



Additionally, our statute does not require manufacturers to reimburse owners for costs associated with a safety recall (e.g., lost wages while the vehicle is being repaired, car rentals, damage caused by the defect, etc.). Nor does the statute authorize the Federal government to reimburse vehicle owners for any costs associated with safety recalls or assist vehicle owners in obtaining reimbursements for costs associated with an alleged defect. We hope this information is helpful to you and regret that we are unable to assist you further.

Should you encounter a safety-related problem with a motor vehicle or item of motor vehicle equipment in the future, you can complete an electronic Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire online at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/ivoq>. 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 cursive script that reads "Randy Reid".

Randy Reid  
Chief Correspondence Research Division  
Office of Defects Investigation  
Enforcement