

NVS-200

[Redacted]  
Ojai, CA  
Phone [Redacted]

2009 APR -7 AM 11:01  
2009 APR -6 P 3:55

March 30, 2009

CL-10264688-3974

NHTSA Administrator  
1200 Jersey Ave. SE  
Washington DC 20590

Re: Tire valve recall  
Dill ACP, Model TR-418

Due to a recent experience in which a front tire of my Mazda Protégé entirely deflated without warning due to the above faulty valve, I have questions about the effectiveness of this recall effort. No harm was done in my case but for your information in implementing the recall and to pass on to others involved, the sequence of events and questions raised follow.

-The valves in question were purchased 7/17/07 from Sears Automotive, Ventura CA, in conjunction with the replacement of two tires. The purchase was fully documented on the invoice, including item number and my name, address and phone number.

-According to the information on your website for the recall beginning on 12/9/08, the Dill company (apparently the distributor and importer) was to notify owners. However, despite the Sears Automotive documentation, I have never been notified by Dill or anyone else.

-Although not a subscriber or regular reader of Consumer Reports magazine, I happen to notice in the 9/08 issue a reference to a recall of valve stems by a company called Tech International (no mention of Dill in the article). The advice given was that for tires replaced since the summer of 2006 the valves should be checked for cracks. Also, various model numbers were listed, including the above TR-418.

-I did not know at the time that model TR-418 was what had been installed on my car since the tires needed to be dismounted to ascertain this. However, pursuant to the Consumer Reports advice, on 8/18/08 I visited Sears Auto Center, where the valves had been purchased, for the purpose of having them checked. They were checked there, and I was told the valves were okay. I do not recall anything being said about any future monitoring, although I did make a note to myself to have the valves checked when the tires would be rotated.

-It was on Sunday 3/22/09 that a neighbor pointed out to my surprise a fully deflated front left tire on my parked car. The deflation had occurred entirely without warning. In driving, in testing the tire pressures, there had been no signs.

-Monday the car was towed to Fred's Tire Man nearby by AAA. Here I learned that the faulty valve was the cause of the deflating. I was charged \$15 for replacing the valve, checking the tire for any other damage (there was none), and checking the other tire (no cracking). It was suggested that I go to Sears for replacing the other valve at no charge, and I may have been told

NM  
11:01  
7/17/09  
NJ

NHTSA Administrator

March 30, 2009

Page 2

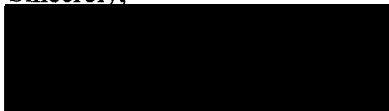
that I could ask Sears to reimburse me for the \$15. The faulty part, which I still have, was returned to me. Imprinted on it is DILL ACP 123 TR 418

-Later in the day the three remaining valves were replaced at no cost at Sears Auto Center (although as far as I know there were no problems with two that had been purchased separately in 2003).

Aside from not being notified, a major concern I have is with the advice apparently being given by Dill and others to those who had tires replaced during the period when the faulty valves were sold. That advice is to check for cracks, and then if there are cracks, have the valves replaced, which will be at no cost. The advice is apparently based on the assumption that the defective valves "will show visible evidence of cracking within a month or two of use" and that the deflation of the tires will occur "over time". (See pp. 4 and 5 of the report of the counsel for Dill Air Controls received by your Recall Mgmt. Div. on 12/8/08 and posted on your website.) However, in my case those assumptions clearly did not hold. As described, the valves were checked well over a year after purchase and said to be okay, and the deflation occurred without any prior indications. A better procedure, it seems clear to me, would have been to have had the tires checked for the model number, dismounting them as needed to determine this, and replacing the valves whether cracked or not if the model was among those being recalled. This would have prevented the deflation that occurred in my case.

Please let me know if you would like me to send in the defective part for examination or if there is any other information you need.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.