

To whom it may concern; (GM engineers)

10/23/2014

Re; Potentially Deadly Integrated Trailer Brake Controller.

I am writing this letter to inform General Motors that a deadly design flaw exists in its programming and or design of its integrated trailer brake controller of my, and probably all 2011+ Chevrolet trucks.

I say this because my truck nearly seriously injured or could have killed myself and part of my family and others during the panic stop a was forced to make. Upon traveling home on a perfectly clear sunny day with dry pavement from a two week long vacation with my 2010 Keystone Raptor fifth wheel trailer in tow (nearly empty) I encountered slowing traffic up ahead of me. I then tapped the brakes to release the cruise control that was set at 55mph. I had 8-10 car lengths in front of me to the nearest car. That car had even more space between him and the car in front of him.

All of the sudden the car in front of me hit his brakes hard causing me to hit mine hard also. With both feet on the brake pedal trying to stop the truck and trailer it was evident that I was not going to be able to stop anywhere near in time to avoid rear ending the car in front of me. At the last possible second I glanced to my left to look in the mirror and beside my truck and then proceeded to turn hard to the left to avoid slamming into the car in front of me. I believe the driver was distracted with ear buds in his ears probably hooked up to a cell phone and when he looked up, he panicked and slammed on his brakes.

Somehow luckily we did not hit anything on the left and no one hit us. I missed the car in front by inches. Shortly after hitting the brakes I realized that there appeared to be no trailer brakes and that the trailer was pushing the truck forward.

Upon coming to a stop with the nose of the truck past the car we noticed his ear buds and he had no clue what had just happened. I then glanced down at my dash and it was flashing back and forth between service stabilitrak and check trailer brakes. I had no choice but to drive several more miles to a safe place to pull the rig over to check things out. I first slid the brake controller manual switch to see if the trailer brakes were functioning. They were not working at all. I got out and checked to see if the trailers electric cord was still plugged in, which it was. I unplugged and reinstalled it several times thinking maybe it lost its connection. I then went to the trailer and felt all 4 hubs to see if they were hot or not. All 4 hubs were almost stone cold as if they had not been applied during the panic stop or when I pulled over to check things out.

At this point we were 50 miles from home towing a 14,000 trail with no trailer brakes. It was then that I decided to turn the truck off and wait a few minutes and restart it. Upon the restart the 2 messages were gone and the trailer brakes were functioning again as verified by the manual slide switch. We proceeded home without incident.

Ever since we got home I have been all over the internet looking for an answer to why the trailer brakes were apparently disabled upon a panic stop situation. What I found was just

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unbelievable to me. I found many posts among many threads of others who have had a similar or the exact thing happen to them while trying to make a panic stop with their rigs in tow. Apparently from what I read, during an ABS/Stabilitrak event the trailer brakes are reduced or disabled in an attempt to reduce the chance of an accident. This has got to be the craziest thing I have ever heard. Why would a trucks brake controller disable the brakes to the trailer it is towing just when they are needed the most (during a panic stop)? This situation is going to kill people if it has not done so already!!!!.

I cannot and will not except the fact that this is even possible for the controller to do that while towing a heavy trailer. These trucks were designed to tow and I would think be designed to stop in an emergency situation.

Shortly before writing this letter a stopped by my local Chevrolet dealer (Len Stoler) to talk to the service manager. They seem to be very good and have always taken care of my issues. She got on her computer and searched for an answer and gave me a print out (attached) of a page in the trucks manual that basically states that the trailer brakes will be automatically adjusted during and ABS/stabilitrak event. She said it was normal and the truck did what it is supposed to do in that instance. Well my truck adjusted them alright, it completely disabled them which could have killed us all.

To anyone reading this letter, let me tell you I am a very !@# person when incomes to maintenance and or preparation before during and after towing.

- Trucks brake controller gain was set at 5.5. Set any higher and I get some wheel lock up upon stopping.
- My truck and trailer were carefully chosen to make sure they were compatible with each other in every way.
- The truck and trailer have been weighed many times in every possible combination of loading the trailer of truck for travel.
- The trailer brakes have been serviced and adjusted regularly and have never failed to work before in the 9,000 miles of towing it. (never had to make a panic stop like this before)
- The truck and trailers tire air pressures are checked before towing it anywhere, to or from home where both are stored in a garage under cover while not in use.
- Both the truck and trailer were mostly empty as we consumed most of what they were loaded with when we left. No water, waste, wood, food, ice, propane etc.
- At the suggestion of the service manager to save any diagnostic charges I checked to see if any codes were stored in the trucks computer with my reader and none were found.

- This truck only has 40,000 miles on it and the camper has only been towed round 9,000 miles.

In closing let me state that this is my 3<sup>rd</sup> Duramax truck. 1<sup>st</sup> one was an 2002 in which I went through the failed fuel injector! @#The 2<sup>nd</sup> was a 2005 which would overheat while climbing a long grade. Now this 2011 that has been back to the dealer numerous times for the poor quality def/ bad nox sensor! @#I was even limped home at 55mph from a previous vacation. It still has the driveline shutter while accelerating from a stop while towing. Whats next?.

It's time to wake up GM!!!!!! And listen to your loyal customers.

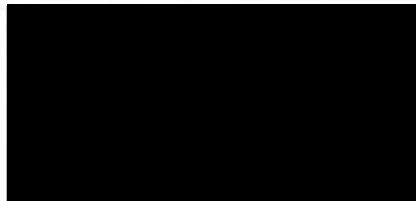
My wife is already telling me to sell the truck and camper and go the motor home route and be done with all this! @#If that happens I can without a doubt guaranty I will never buy another pick up again since we will have no need for it. Got any idea how many times I can rent one for \$60,000?

At the request of the service manager at the dealer a copy of this letter will be sent to her. I will also be sending a copy to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

Thanks to all for reading;



Westminster MD



Tow/Haul is designed to be most effective when the vehicle and trailer combined weight is at least 75 percent of the vehicle's Gross Combined Weight Rating (GCWR). See "Weight of the Trailer" under Trailer Towing. Tow/Haul is most useful under the following driving conditions:

- When pulling a heavy trailer or a large or heavy load through rolling terrain.
- When pulling a heavy trailer or a large or heavy load in stop-and-go traffic.
- When pulling a heavy trailer or a large or heavy load in busy parking lots where improved low speed control of the vehicle is desired.

Operating the vehicle in Tow/Haul when lightly loaded or with no trailer at all will not cause damage. However, there is no benefit to the selection of Tow/Haul when the vehicle is unloaded. Such a selection when unloaded may result in unpleasant engine and transmission driving characteristics and reduced fuel economy. Tow/Haul is recommended only when pulling a heavy trailer or a large or heavy load.

### **Integrated Trailer Brake Control System**



The vehicle may have an Integrated Trailer Brake Control (ITBC) system for electric trailer brakes.

This symbol is located on the Trailer Brake Control Panel on vehicles with an Integrated Trailer Brake Control system. The power output to the trailer brakes is based on the amount of brake pressure being applied by the vehicle's brake system. This available power output to the trailer brakes can be adjusted to a wide range of trailering situations.

The ITBC system is integrated with the vehicle's brake, antilock brake, and StabiliTrak (if equipped) systems. In trailering conditions that cause the vehicle's antilock brake or StabiliTrak systems to activate, power sent to the trailer's brakes will be automatically adjusted to minimize trailer wheel lock-up. This does not imply that the trailer has StabiliTrak.

2500 and 3500 series vehicles with StabiliTrak have a Trailer Sway Control (TSC) feature. See Trailer Sway Control (TSC).

2500 and 3500 series vehicles with StabiliTrak have a Hill Start Assist (HSA) feature. See Hill Start Assist (HSA).

If the vehicle's brake, antilock brake, or StabiliTrak systems are not functioning properly, the ITBC system may not be fully functional or may not function at all. Make sure all of these systems are fully operational to ensure full functionality of the ITBC system.

The ITBC system is powered through the vehicle's electrical system. Turning the ignition off will also turn off the ITBC system. The ITBC system is fully functional only when the ignition is in ON or in RUN.

The ITBC system can only be used with trailers with electric brakes.

**Warning:** Connecting a trailer that is not compatible with the ITBC system may result in reduced or complete loss of trailer braking. There may be an increase in stopping distance or trailer instability which could result in personal injury or damage to the vehicle, trailer, or other property. An aftermarket controller may be available for use with trailers with surge, air, or electric-over-hydraulic trailer brake systems. To determine the type of

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