

CL 10679172-6821

INFORMATION Redacted PURSUANT TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(B)(6)

[Redacted]
Bandera, Texas
[Redacted]

October 5, 2015

✓ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
West Building
Washington, DC 20590

OCT 20 2015

U.S. Rep. Lamar Smith
2409 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

State Sen. Troy Fraser
500 Chestnut Street #810
Abilene, TX 79602

State Rep. Andrew Murr
Post Office Box 125
Junction, Texas 76849

To the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Rep. Smith, Sen. Fraser & Rep. Murr:

A few days ago a friend told me about the enclosed news report about a man and his dog in Texas dying in his parked car after being trapped inside the car by electronic door locks that did not function when he tried to exit the vehicle.

There was reportedly a manual door release described in the vehicle's owner's manual he did not know about. Its existence did not save his life and his dog's life. There is no substitute for manual door locks that always unlock when a person pulls on the interior door lever in an attempt to exit the vehicle.

On January 13, 2015, five (5) months before this tragedy, I wrote to all recipients of this letter warning of this danger. See copy enclosed. These deaths (and probably others) could have been avoided if my warning had elicited a proper and prompt response. More unnecessary deaths will result from further inaction.

Respectfully,

[Redacted Signature]

enclosure

RR
10/20/15
GMD

NEWS
JUN 10 2015, 10:51 PM ET

Texas Man and His Dog Found Dead After Becoming Trapped Inside Car

by KATHRYN ROBINSON

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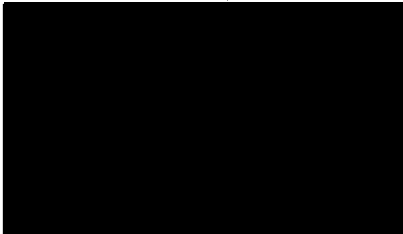
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A U.S. Army veteran from Texas and his dog were found dead after an electronic malfunction apparently caused the pair to become trapped inside the man's sports car.

Port Arthur police officials say [REDACTED] and his Shih Tzu, named [REDACTED] were found unresponsive inside the Chevy Corvette on Monday afternoon.

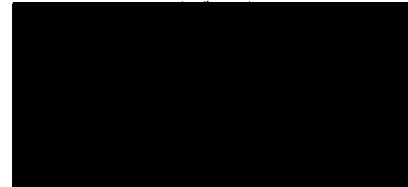
Police believe [REDACTED] became trapped inside the car with electric locks and windows after a battery cable came loose and locked the doors and disabled the horn, NBC affiliate KBMT reported.



locked in his car. KBMT / KBMT

The 2007 Corvette does not have manual door lock, leaving [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] unable to escape and likely dying of heat, according to KBMT, quoting fire officials.

[REDACTED] was not able to call for help because he had mistakenly left his cell phone in a nearby Waffle House.



New Rule Leaves Drivers Furious

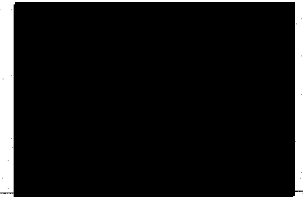
Why did no one tell drivers about this new rule? If you drive less than **45 miles per day**, you better read this...

EASY AUTO QUOTES

[\[read more\]](#)

FROM THE WEB

Sponsored Links



[REDACTED]
Bandera, Texas [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

January 13, 2015

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
West Building
Washington, DC 20590

U.S. Rep. Lamar Smith
2409 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

State Sen. Troy Fraser
500 Chestnut Street #810
Abilene, TX 79602

State Rep. Andrew Murr
Post Office Box 125
Junction, Texas 76849

To the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Rep. Smith, Sen. Fraser & Rep. Murr:

I recently found myself unable to get out of a rented Toyota Prius and later a 2013 Ford Focus because of electronically operated door locks that make the interior door-open levers inoperative. Looking on the Internet I see others have had similar experiences: See the enclosed first hand reports of others trapped in automobiles or other motor vehicles because of modern motor vehicle door locking systems.

I first became aware of this in a car I rented in Europe a few years ago: If I used the wireless remote control to lock the doors while I was sitting in the driver's seat, all interior door levers and window controls became inoperative, and there was no way for me to get out of the vehicle without using the wireless remote control to first unlock the doors (unless perhaps I was able to smash a window).

According to one of the enclosed reports I found on the Internet, the same systems in some vehicles also disable the vehicle's horn, preventing a person trapped in the vehicle from alerting others who may be nearby.

On October 24, 2014, I used the wireless remote control to unlock the doors and got in the back seat of a rented Toyota Prius to retrieve an item from luggage beneath the hatchback, closing the door behind me. Although I made no effort to lock the doors, the doors locked, and I found the door levers on both rear doors were inoperative. Later I looked and saw the child locks were on, which was why this happened. However, I was still unable to get out of the car when I crawled into the front right (passenger) seat and pulled on the door lever. This was true regardless of which position the lock-unlock lever next to the door-open lever was in. I panicked at this point and don't specifically recall

pulling on the driver's door open lever. However, I probably did, trying the door-open lever with the lock-unlock lever in each position. I had the "key" in my pocket that is detected wirelessly by the car's electronic system and pushed the START button while holding the brake peddle down. The ignition came on, and I was then able to open the driver's door. But what if I'd gotten in the car and didn't have the wireless "key" with me? My only hope of getting out of the car without assistance from others would be kicking out a window. Some people would not be strong enough to do that.

On December 30, 2014 in Sarasota, Florida, I got in the back seat of a 2013 Ford Focus that had been parked in the sun, so the interior of the car was hot. The electric window control didn't work. Fortunately, the ignition was still off, so the door lever opened the door when I pulled on it. Later that day in the back seat of the same car we stopped at a red light, and to test it I pulled on the back seat interior door-open lever and found it inoperative. The next day, on December 31, 2014, after exiting the right front door of this same 2013 Ford Focus I reached inside the car to the interior right rear door lever and pulled on it and found it was inoperative, but the door opened when I pulled on the exterior door handle. I thought the purpose of motor vehicle door locks is to lock people out of the car, but today's motor vehicle door locking systems lock or trap people in the vehicle.

This type of motor vehicle door locking system is a life-threatening safety hazard, particularly on hot, sunny summer days. I understand the need for child locks on rear doors, but the interior door-open levers on motor vehicle front doors should always function, and so should the interior rear door-open levers if the child locks have not been flipped on. Disabling all interior door-open levers may make theft of or from a motor vehicle more difficult, but in my opinion the risk of trapping persons inside the vehicle is a more important concern.

I urge all of you to take appropriate steps to remedy this safety hazard. Motorists should be warned of this hazard, and motor vehicle recalls to make motor vehicle door locks function reliably should be considered.

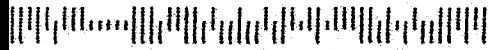
Respectfully,



enclosures



Bandera, Texas



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