

Cl-11311272-1097

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

01/09/2020

To whom it may concern/safety/inadequate vital structural steel

NHTSA

Department of Over Site/compromised steel
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Sir/Madame

Enclosed is a recent letter I wrote to the Ford Motor Company pointing out what I firmly believe is a very potential and deadly part currently in place as part of their 2003 and possibly more Focus SE, and their response TO that letter. The part in particular is the control arms of the vehicle and what I believe cost cutting in an area so vital for the car's control!

I have pictures included in addition to other printed material I found online since. In the letter I mentioned giving me a brand new car and the option of reporting this to you first. Both I expected a negative response so that I could continue with my original plan of action regardless of their answer. Nevertheless, I believe wholeheartedly, that this car or any car with these extremely cheap and poorly produced (they might be 1/16" inch thick), should be recalled and replaced with arms that are solid (which I doubt would ever happen) I have pictures of some and they are on Subaru I have recently looked at, but at least made to be produced to 1/2" thick minimum before serious fatalities or injuries occur. And I have no doubt they will and possibly may have already but not been brought to the public eye or even your attention. Well, at least NOW, you will have been made aware of them and I'll have done my part. They did suggest (FORD) to keeping my receipts for replacement and repair. But there is NO way in !@# I would replace the control arms manufactured of such inefficiency and poor craftsmanship

I hope upon after reading all this material that this organization does the right thing and mandates that Ford remedy this problem and the future of this current cost cutting and irresponsible activity, Thank You very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

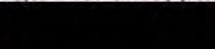
EA
2-21-20
WD

Addendum ,

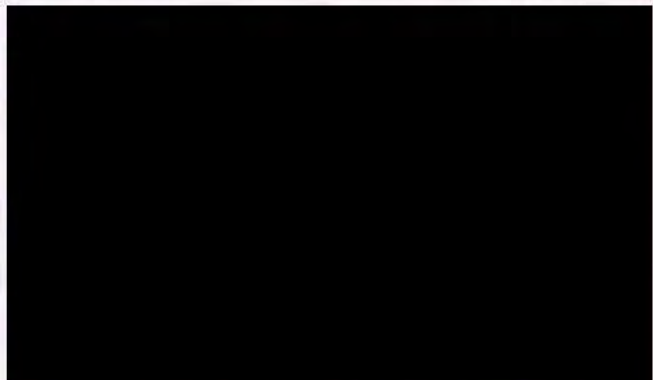
It is vitally to reiterate here that this near life threatening catastrophe happened October 29,2019. I apologize for my tardiness(personal events), but not for FMC; only because the grave latitude of this. And this vehicle was inspected 05/17/2019 (attached). So about 5 months,correct?

The vehicle showed ABSOLUTELY no symptoms described in the attached articles I found within and furthermore the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Inspection Stations do a more throughout report than most of the country and each is videoed, before it is declared safe to be on the road and receive their yearly inspection sticker!

Included are 2 other pictures of control arms from other vehicles. I do not to which manufacturer they belong. One picture however shows the thickness of it. Compare it to the thickness of the Ford SE and I am quite confident you can EASILY see the difference and hence my argument,(together with my letter and accompanying pictures,etc.), that these particular vehicles produced by the Ford Motor Company are dangerous and unfit for the road and that the NHTSA has an obligation to the owners of these vehicles not only to be recalled and repaired with a much better manufactured part, but Control Arms produced in every vehicle should be looked at and their thickness be constructed to a much higher standard to prevent the possibility of this happening to anyone or heaven forbid Death.

Thanks again for time, patience and consideration and I sincerely hope that this brings positive results., 

Sincerely/respectfully and concerned,



COPY IF LETTER SENT TO FMIC

[REDACTED]
Pittsfield, MA
[REDACTED]

October 31, 2019

Senior VP/Manufacturer/Design/Engineer

Ford Motor Company
P.O. Box 6248
Dearborn, MI 48126

Dear Sir/Madam,

And Good Morning to you! My late grandmother was born in Dearborn; always spoke highly of her birthplace (although I have never been there).

Initially, I had intended on opening this letter with a little humor with referencing your name (FORD) and the street lingo associated with the individual meaning of each letter with myself as being actually included. But what I'm about to tell you is not a bit humorous in no uncertain terms, and what I believe (as do others who others who now know and seen), a serious issue a potentially perilous manufacture defect and/or an irresponsible sign off on perhaps, thee most critical part of any vehicle.

Hello,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Pittsfield, MA; as far west in the part of the state where the NY line is less than 10 miles from my residence and approximately 35 miles from Albany International Airport, NY (the location has its point). Oh, and I'm gonna be singing The Beatles age song this December, 19th.

I own a 2003 Ford Focus SE 5speed V1#1FAPP343X3V [REDACTED] [Note: The vehicle however is titled, registered, and insured in my son's name ([REDACTED]) due to personal reasons at the time of purchase. But for all intent and purposes, the vehicle is mine.] It has the V tech engine with about 185k miles on it currently. I bought it from the neighbor as he is not mechanically inclined and couldn't fix the serpentine belt/kit, or other things needed to pass inspection. It also needed an AC compressor, wiper motor, and new headlamps (blurred out). Tires were relatively new and the body showed no signs of any signs of significant rust (see attached). Furthermore, considering the mileage, I was amazed at the power the engine still maintained and ran very smooth. I believed I had acquired a deal AND a nice vehicle. The car passed MA inspection, which you may or may not know, is quite rigorous, strict, comprehensive, and tight! (I wanted you to have a little backdrop on the vehicle before I unloaded the issue at hand.)

Two days ago, October 29th, 2019, I had to go to Albany International to pick up my son flying in from Denver. The trip usually averages about an hour with speeds that vary from (in this particular case, due to utility work on I-90E) 5 mph to 70 mph on back roads and highways. The higher speeds, naturally, on the interstate (I-90), which bypasses the city of Albany offering exits (and depending upon your knowledge of the area and the traffic) alternative ways to get to the airport. Anyway, I probably drove on I-90 about 20 minutes of the trip, deciding to get off at the Everett Dr exit. Then, I took a right about ½ mile at (estimate) 35mph, followed by a left onto Sand Creek Rd at (estimate) 25mph (highly residential). About 2 minutes approaching an intersection, when the car abruptly stopped dead in its tracks, turned to the right, making this CRACK noise, which put more than a startle in me.

I had no idea what had just happened. Upon getting out of the car and examining what HAD happened, I was positively appalled to see that the (HOLLOW) right control arm had snapped, dug into the tar (or the broken axle caused by this); and additionally, breaking the tie rod and creasing the brake line. The car could not be moved, thereby, causing traffic congestion. Eventually, the local Colonie Police came to investigate and had the vehicle towed (maybe a mile away) plus a \$216.00 charge. Meanwhile, my son is expecting me and I'm about 10 minutes out with no transportation. I got an \$20.00 Uber ride as quick as I could and got to the airport just in time, and the rest is another chapter basically irrelevant to this letter.

But the reason I am writing this letter is multifold. If that control arm had split apart maybe 10 minutes prior as I was driving at a higher rate of speed on the highway, I don't think I'd be writing to you now (as I'm pretty sure the vehicle would have flipped over several times and I'd be lucky to be alive). But the Lord was watching over me, and has been all my life, so I thank Him. But at the same time, it is my responsibility to question the integrity of the manufacturer in perhaps, the most critical part of a car that controls its direction; and why THAT part is not a solid piece of metal and not some 1/8th inch thick hollow tube? Seriously, that is just plain wrong and cheap... and scary.

Hence, in bringing this to your attention, this horrible potential for death or serious injury, I want your company to award me a new vehicle, recall, fix this hazard, and complete reimbursement of my time and expenses. You may not feel the same way, but I can assure you that I intend to send a copy of this letter to the NHTSA. I will extend the courtesy of hearing back from you first promptly, however, for further discussion.

In the meantime, I am without a vehicle, but am happy I still have the chance to sing that Beatles song shortly and would expect a call or visit from a regional or district manager upon receipt of this.

I am enclosing pictures of the damage, so you can see for yourself how cutting corners in critical areas can put people's lives at risk, unaware of this inherent danger (or feel free to come and see the car for yourself, it is on jacks in my driveway). I hope you take this matter as seriously as I do and do something about it before someone or many someones DO get killed. I am not a seeker of lawsuits/rewards and such, but bringing this to your attention deserves merit. I have no intention of paying a dime to fix a car whose central operation of control is potentially fatal. I have much respect for Ford, but this is simply unjust.



Copy
December 6, 2019

[REDACTED]
Pittsfield, M [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for contacting Ford Motor Company. We have received your letter regarding your 2003 Ford Focus and your request for a new vehicle, reimbursement, recall and a fix for your vehicle's concern.

We appreciate the time you took to write to us. I was able to look into your request for financial assistance and a new vehicle. After reviewing my resources, I do not see any programs or recalls that can provide coverage for your requests. Therefore, we cannot provide reimbursement or a new vehicle to you. We do recommend keeping your receipts in case a program is initiated in the future. If one is created you will be notified via the postal mail.

Please note that your comments will be sent to the appropriate department for review. We recommend that you contact the Service Manager at your preferred Ford dealership directly to review your concerns. Upon Ford's investigation, recalls can be created, if found necessary. However, we here at the Customer Relationship Center (CRC) are not able to determine when a recall will be announced until after Ford Motor Company's Recall Division has launched it. We thank you for providing your comments about your vehicle. By doing so, it allows us to identify areas of concern in efforts to continuously make improvements.

If you have further questions or concerns, you can reach our Customer Relationship Center via chat Monday – Friday 8:30 AM – 10:00 PM EST and Saturday/Sunday 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM EST. You will find our chat option on www.owner.ford.com, scroll almost to the bottom of the webpage where you will see a blue banner with our LIVE CHAT feature. You can also reach our inbound phone team Monday – Friday 8:00 AM – 11:00 PM EST and Saturday 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM EST at 1-800-392-3673. Hearing-impaired callers with access to a TDD may contact 1-800-232-5952.

Thank you for your comments. We hope that this has not made your faith in the Ford brand waiver and hope that we can keep you as a loyal and valued customer.

Sincerely,

Ebonee
Customer Service Representative
Ford Motor Company



Ford Se
1 message

Sat, Feb 1, 2020 at 8:22 PM

Pics

7 attachments



20191113_160000.jpg
3104K



20191030_164022.jpg
3360K



20191030_164016.jpg
519K



20191030_164003.jpg
2517K



20191030_164143.jpg
3881K



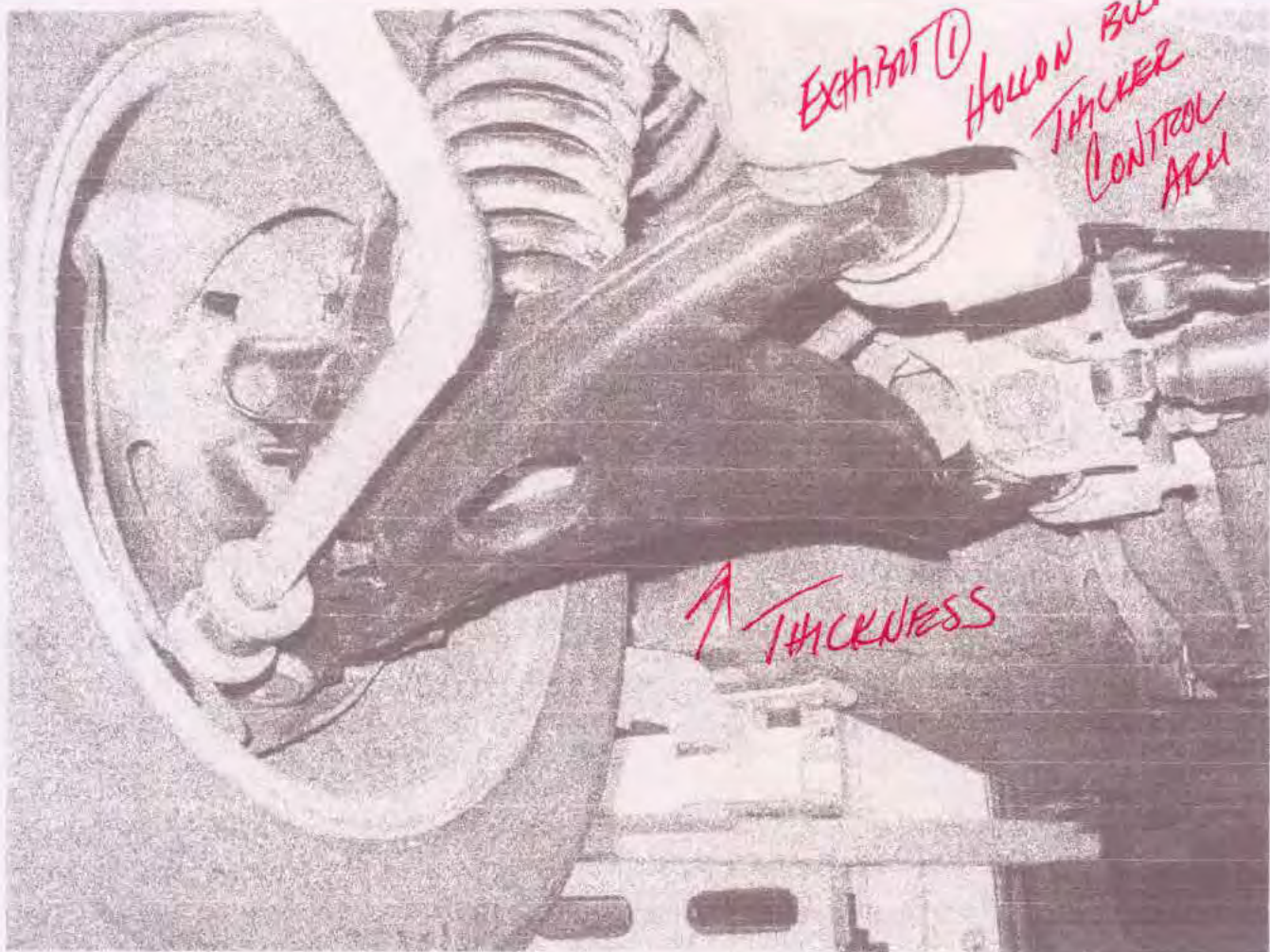
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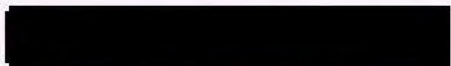
20191030_164135.jpg
2607K

Control arms, bushings, and ball joints may not be common household terms for many vehicle owners. You may have never even heard of them, but they are critical components of your vehicle's suspension system that allow your tires to smoothly go up and down in a controlled fashion. Without them, your ride probably wouldn't be very enjoyable.

Most vehicles use either one or two control arms per wheel, on both the front and rear suspension. Many front-wheel drive vehicles only use a lower control arm, while trucks and SUVs often have both an upper and lower control arm. A control arm connects the wheel hub and steering knuckle to the frame of the vehicle. They are typically equipped with bushings on the frame side of the vehicle and a ball joint on the wheel side of the vehicle that allow flex and controlled movement according to road conditions and steering input from the driver. Control arms allow wheels to move up and down while preventing forward and rearward movement.

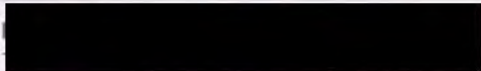


Control arm bushings usually consist of an outer metal sleeve, a durable rubber or polyurethane bushing, and an inner metal sleeve. Control arm bushings are important for driving comfort and handling. They cushion the suspension system which in turn controls noise and vibrations, and also provide a softer ride over bumps. Bushings can flex and move while retaining stiffness and the ability to return to their original shape and position.



Ford Focus SE

1 message



Sat, Feb 1, 2020 at 8:45 PM

Car prior to accident. Nice!

2 attachments



20190706_160826.jpg
3058K



20190605_141527.jpg
3140K



control. The tire will be at an unintended angle, and the vehicle will come to an abrupt halt. This could damage the wheel and tire, other suspension components, and possibly even other parts of the vehicle.

There are a lot of possible signs of a failing ball joint or control arm bushings. These may include a clicking, popping, or snapping sound when the wheel is turned and eventually turn into a squeaking sound at the end of a stop, when the gas pedal is used, and/or when turning the steering wheel. Another symptom could be knocking and clunking noises coming from the suspension when going over bumps. The sounds will continuously get louder as the component wears or eventually breaks. Dry ball joints have dramatically increased friction and can cause the steering to stick or be more difficult. Excessively worn bushings or ball joints can cause wheel shimmy, which may cause vibrations that are felt in the steering wheel. Vibrations may increase during acceleration and smooth out at higher speeds.

Another symptom commonly associated with bad or failing control arm components is steering wandering. Excessively worn ball joints, bushings, or a combination of these can cause the vehicle's steering alignment to shift, which may cause the steering to pull to the left or right when traveling down the road. This will require constant driver correction to steer the vehicle straight.

The time for regularly scheduled oil changes is the best time to inspect control arms, bushings, and ball joints. A quick test drive will allow for a wide range of driving conditions. Cornering left and right, hitting bumps, and cruising on straight and level ground while braking and accelerating are all important to get a feel for any noises or performance issues related to the control arm assemblies. Visually inspect the control arm bushings for cracking, splitting, tears, missing parts, and oil saturation.

When inspecting ball joints, first look to see if the rubber boots holding the grease inside the ball joint are in good shape. If the boot is torn, or just plain gone, chances are the ball joint is in the process of failing. If the ball joint is capable of being greased, use only the grease recommended by the vehicle's manufacturer. Most modern ball joints come lubricated for life and are therefore incapable of being greased.

Determining if the ball joints are good or bad depends largely on which type of suspension and ball joints are used in the vehicle in question. If you are lucky, ball joints will have built-in wear indicators allowing easy inspection. If not, relieve the load on the suspension by jacking the vehicle up and inspecting each individual ball joint for play. As there are more than a few types of suspension setups, it is best to follow the inspection procedure provided by the vehicle manufacturer. Severe ball joint failure can cause vehicle suspension separation, so it is best not to take guesses when dealing with suspension issues.

Vehicle control arms, bushings, and ball joints are very important suspension and steering components. When they become worn it can cause problems for the vehicle that may compromise handling, comfort, and may result in catastrophic separation of the control arm and knuckle. For this reason, if you suspect your vehicle's control arms, suspension bushings, or ball joints may be bad or worn, have them inspected by an ASE certified technician.

EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED



Vehicle Inspection Report

Please Review This Important Information

Your vehicle has **PASSED** its **SAFETY TEST**. The results are summarized in this report.

Questions? Visit www.mass.gov/vehiclecheck or call Customer Service at 1-844-358-0135. Customer Service is staffed from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, and from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday.

Overall Result:	PASS	Vehicle Information		Station Information
Safety Result	PASS	VIN	1FAFP343X3 [REDACTED]	CREA ENTERPRISES, INC. D/
Emissions Result	N/A	License Plate	[REDACTED]	483 WEST HOUSATONIC STREET
Start Test Date/Time	5/17/2019 3:05 PM	Plate Type/State	PAN / MA	
End Test Date/Time	5/17/2019 3:11 PM	Vehicle Type	PASSENGER	(413) 443-5154
Test Type	Regular	Year / Make	2003 Ford	PITTSFIELD MA
Sticker Number	200949115	Model	Focus	Station Number PB050653
Inspection Type	Initial	Fuel Type	GASOLINE	Workstation Number MAW00001052
Inspection Counter	1	Engine Cyl / Size	4 / 2L	Inspector Number *****3562
		GVWR	8500	
		Odometer	181841	

Inspection Fee	\$35.00
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Safety Inspection Results

License Plate Mounting and Condition	PASS	Service Brakes	PASS	Parking Brake	PASS
Horn	PASS	Stop Lights and Tail Lights	PASS	Headlight Aim and Operation	PASS
Lighting Devices and Reflectors	PASS	Directional Signals and 4-Ways	PASS	Front End	PASS
Steering and Suspension	PASS	Frame	PASS	Windshield Wipers and Cleaner	PASS
Safety Belts	PASS	Air Bags	N/A	Muffler and Exhaust System	PASS
Window Tint	PASS	Windshield	PASS	Rear View Mirror	PASS
Bumpers/Fenders/Exterior Sheet Metal	PASS	Fuel Tank Filler Cap	PASS	Fuel Tank Filler Neck and Components	PASS
Visible Smoke	PASS	Altered Vehicle Height	PASS	Tires	PASS
Other	PASS				

Inspection Comments

None

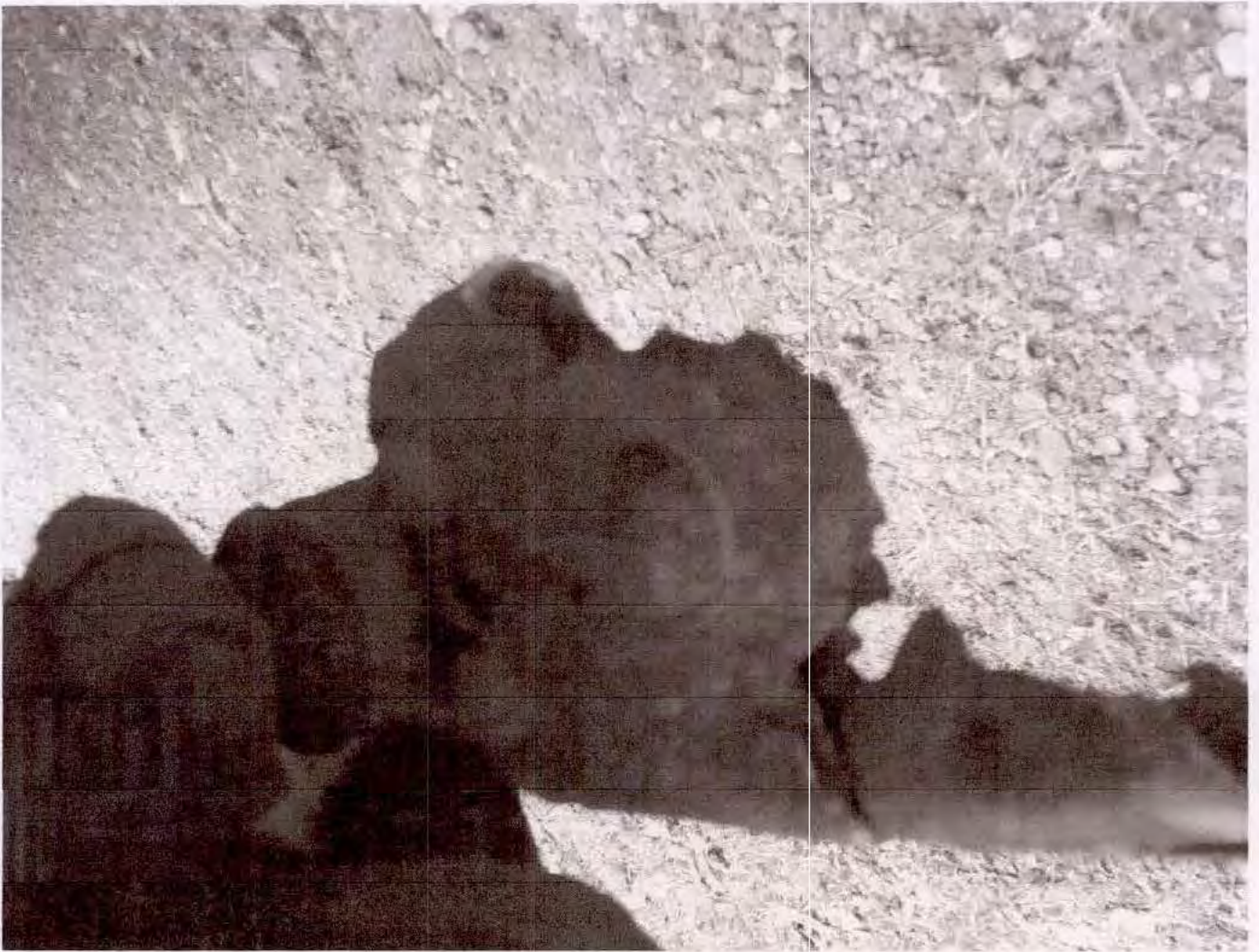
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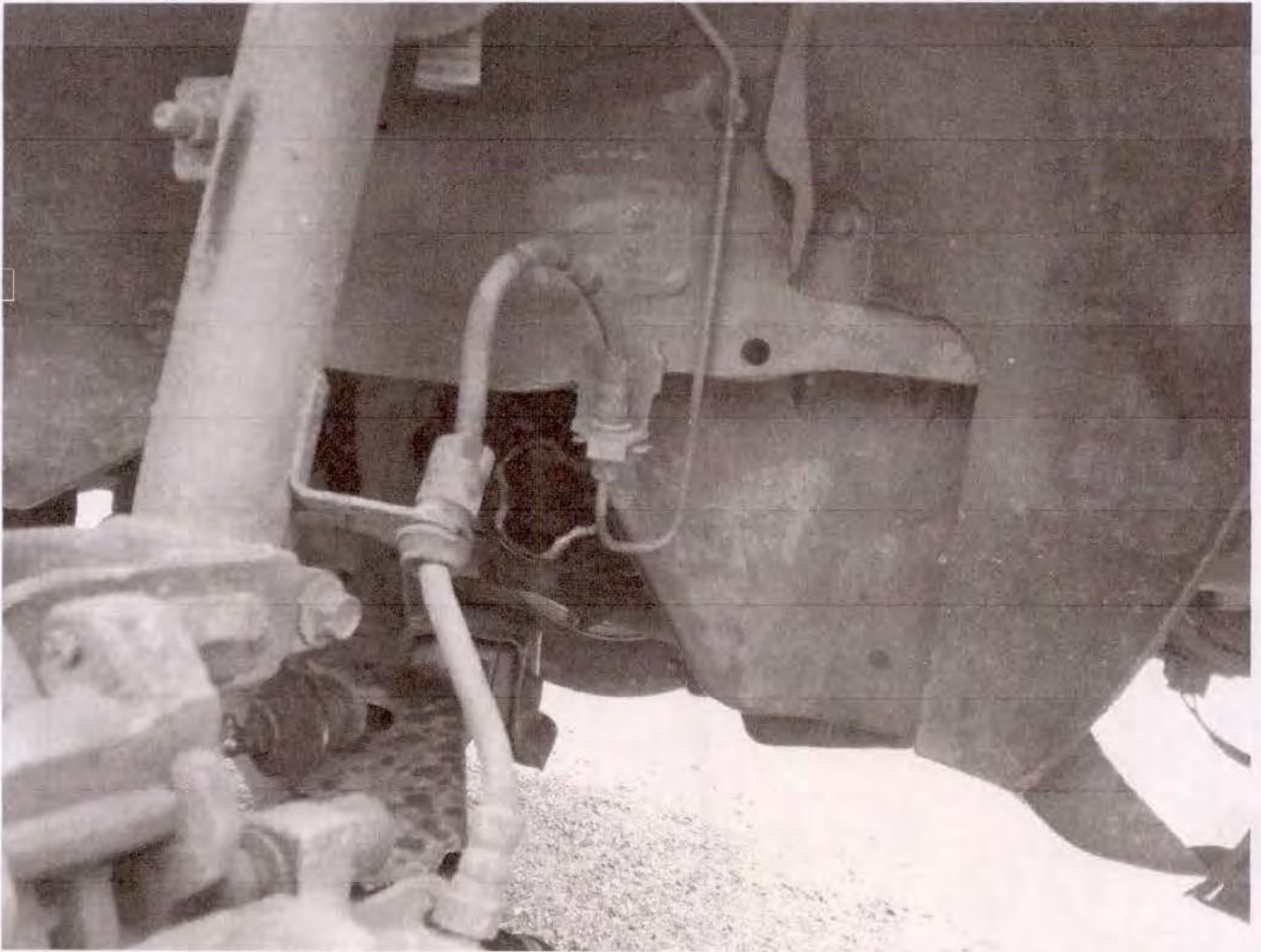
Scan to visit website

















[REDACTED]



Attn: Director / Service Streamline
Enterprise Design / Team

Washington, DC 20590
Wes Box

120 New Jersey Avenue SE

NHTS A Headquarters

