

Kevin Clouse [REDACTED] Flowery Branch, GA [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Date: November 7, 2025

U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Office of Defects Investigation (NVS-210) 1200 New Jersey Ave, SE West Building Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Defect Petition – Hidden and Unlabeled Emergency Mechanical Door Release Resulting in Entrapment and Severe Injury Vehicle: 2022 Tesla Model 3 VIN: [REDACTED] Incident Date: May 14, 2023 – Georgia Hospital: Grady Memorial Hospital, Atlanta, GA

To Whom It May Concern,

I am submitting this petition requesting NHTSA to open a safety defect investigation into the emergency mechanical door release design in the Tesla Model 3. The current design fails to comply with FMVSS 206 requiring emergency egress controls to be readily accessible and clearly identifiable.

On May 14, 2023, I was involved in a head-on collision in which my 2022 Tesla Model 3 lost electrical power. The electronic door controls immediately stopped functioning. The interior cabin caught fire, and I became trapped inside the vehicle.

The required mechanical emergency door release was hidden, unlabeled, and not intuitive to locate during an emergency. No instructional labeling was present on the door panel and no safety training or delivery briefing was provided by Tesla regarding emergency exit procedures in power-loss scenarios.

In order to escape, I was forced to crawl into the rear seat and repeatedly kick the rear passenger window until it shattered. During this attempt to escape a burning vehicle, I sustained a fractured hip, fractured arm, and a fractured ankle. I later required three surgeries and a full hip replacement as a result of these injuries.

This is a design flaw, not an isolated incident. The Tesla Model 3 fleet continues to be sold and operated with: - A concealed and unlabeled emergency release, and - No warning, no training, and no owner notification.

This creates an ongoing and life-threatening risk of occupant entrapment in collisions, battery fires, submersion events, and electrical failures.

I request NHTSA to: 1. Open a Defect Investigation. 2. Require Tesla to clearly label and mark the manual emergency releases. 3. Issue owner notifications and service bulletins to all existing Model 3 owners. 4. Update vehicle delivery procedures and digital owner manual prompts to properly instruct emergency escape during power loss.

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent safety matter. I am prepared to provide medical records, crash reports, and photographs upon request.

Sincerely, Kevin Clouse Hip Replacement and Injury Survivor Tesla Entrapment Case (May 14, 2023)

Department of Transportation

To: W48- 226

Building: DOT

Mailstop: 4 West

Rtg Symbol: NVS-200,210,300,010

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DOT

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Kevin Chase

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CERTIFIED MAIL



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