



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Memorandum

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

Subject: Test Request: Testing and Analysis of Side Curtain Air Bags Date: December 7, 2006

From: Kathleen C. DeMeter, Director Office of Defects Investigation Reply to: NVS-212mjl
Attn of: PE06-045

To: Michael Monk, Director
Vehicle Research and Test Center

This memorandum requests the Vehicle Research and Test Center (VRTC) to conduct the testing as described below.

BACKGROUND: The Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) is conducting a Preliminary Evaluation (PE06-045) concerning the potential for side curtain air bag failures on model year (MY) 2006 Dodge Durango vehicles. As you already know, the investigation was opened based on the results of the ejection mitigation test program conducted by NHTSA's Office of Vehicle Safety Research. In three out of 35 tests conducted on the Durango, the diffuser tube for the side curtain air bag fractured during deployment and the air bag failed to inflate properly. At this time, ODI is not aware of any real-world failure reports describing a failure on a MY 2006 Durango vehicle similar to that observed in the above mentioned tests.

OBJECTIVES: The objectives of this test program are to conduct (1) more deployment tests of side curtain air bags (at least 30 tests) and (2) metallurgical analysis of failed diffuser tubes.

SUBJECT VEHICLES/COMPONENTS: Subject vehicles include all MY 2006 Dodge Durango vehicles equipped with optional side curtain air bags. The side curtain air bag assemblies to be used for the deployment tests should be new replacement assemblies for use on the subject vehicles.

TEST PROCEDURES: VRTC should determine the test procedures necessary to meet the objectives of this test program. However, keep all vehicle interior components such as the headliner in place for the deployment tests.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The project engineer at ODI is Michael Lee. ODI will identify the method for selecting test samples of side curtain air bags. The objective will be to include test samples that were built around the time that the three failed units were built.

SCHEDULE: We would like to have the testing completed by February 9, 2007.