
CENTER FOR AUTO SAFETY

1825 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, NW #330 WASHINGTON, DC 20009-5708 (202) 328-7700

February 14, 2007

Ms. Kathleen DeMeter
Office of Defects Investigation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
400 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Ms. Demeter:

The Center for Auto Safety (CAS) has been investigating reports of tire and strut failure involving the 2004-2006 Pontiac GTO, and is concerned that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has yet to open an investigation into this issue.

The agency has received at least 65 complaints involving tires on the 2004-2005 GTO, involving 8 blowouts and one crash. CAS has received 7 complaints regarding these vehicles. Many of these complaints cite tire wear caused by contact with struts as the source of the failures. The problem seems to occur early in the lifespan of the vehicle, as a number of complaints cite mileages of less than 10,000 at the time of the failure.

The 2004-2006 GTO was manufactured by GM subsidiary Holden in Australia based on the Holden Monaro platform. The Australian version came equipped with tires of 235mm in width, however the GTO sold in the United States was equipped with wider tires of 245mm width. The larger width of the GTO tire results in contact with the struts, wearing the tire and creating a risk of tire failures that can result in loss of vehicle control. Additionally, many GTO owners are forced to replace worn tires and damaged struts at their own expense.

The 2006 Pontiac GTO was manufactured with redesigned front struts apparently aimed at correcting the tire wear problem. However, NHTSA has received approximately 130 complaints of front strut failure in the 2006 model. Given the relatively low production and sales numbers of the GTO, the rate of strut failure appears to be significant.

CAS requests that NHTSA look into these issues immediately and pursue appropriate action to ensure that no further GTO owners be placed at risk of physical harm by these defects.

Sincerely,



Michael Brooks
Staff Attorney



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

2007 MAR 30 AM 7:41

400 Seventh St., SW
Washington, DC 20590

Mr. Michael Brooks
Center for Auto Safety
1825 Connecticut avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20009

NVS-216 aae
Ref. # 10183727

Dear Mr. Brooks:

Thank you for your correspondence dated February 14, 2007, regarding reports of tire and strut failure in model year (MY) 2004-2006 Pontiac GTO vehicles. Your correspondence was received on February 20, 2007.

On February 16, 2007, the Office of Defects investigation (ODI) opened investigation PE07-010 (resume enclosed), concerning front strut/tire interference on MY 2004-2006 Pontiac GTO vehicles.

If further assistance is needed, please contact Mr. Gregory Magno, Chief, Defects Assessment Division, ODI, at (202) 366-5226.

Sincerely,

Kathleen C. DeMeter, Director
Office of Defects Investigation
Enforcement





U.S. Department
of Transportation
**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 07-010
Date Opened: 02/16/2007
Principal Investigator: Derek Rinehardt
Subject: Front strut to tire interference

Manufacturer: General Motors Corp.
Products: MY 2004 - 2006 Pontiac GTO
Population: 41,000 (estimated)

Problem Description: Front tires may fail suddenly due to interference contact with front struts, possibly resulting in a loss of vehicle control.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	69		
Crashes/Fires:	1		
Injury Incidents:	0		
# Injuries:	0		
Fatality Incidents:	0		
# Fatalities:	0		
Other*:	0		

*Description Of Other:

Action: A Preliminary Evaluation has been opened.

Engineer: Derek Rinehardt *DR*
Div. Chief: Jeffrey L. Quandt
Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 02/16/2007
Date: 02/16/2007
Date: 02/16/2007

Summary: ODI has received 69 complaints that allege a front strut to tire interference condition in model year (MY) 2004 through 2006 Pontiac GTO vehicles. The complaints indicate that the condition causes inner sidewall wear to the tires.

Seven of the complainants allege tire failure caused by the interference condition of the strut to the adjacent tire. Four of these complainants allege they were traveling at speeds of forty miles per hour or greater when the tire failed. One of these complainants also alleges the tire failure caused a crash.

A Preliminary Evaluation is being opened to assess the frequency, scope and potential safety implications of the alleged defect.

DR 2/16/07