




Memorandum

Date: August 11, 2020

Subject: INFORMATION: Audit Announcement | NHTSA's Oversight of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards | Project No. 20S3009S000
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

From: David Pouliott 
Assistant Inspector General for Surface Transportation Audits

To: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

According to preliminary estimates from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), more than 36,000 people died in motor vehicle crashes in the United States in 2019.¹ As part of its mission to prevent and reduce vehicle crashes, NHTSA establishes Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) that incorporate Federal laws intended to improve traffic safety. NHTSA's FMVSS specify the design, construction, performance, and durability requirements for new motor vehicles and regulated automobile safety-related components, such as air bags and seatbelts.

NHTSA's Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance is responsible for ensuring that manufacturers comply with FMVSS. This includes testing new vehicles, enforcing regulations, and reviewing and monitoring requirements in a number of areas. Given the importance to the traveling public that all new vehicles and components meet Federal safety standards, we are initiating a review of NHTSA's FMVSS process. Our objective for this self-initiated audit is to assess NHTSA's efforts to set and enforce Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards.

We plan to begin the audit in the coming weeks and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance meeting. We will conduct our work at NHTSA Headquarters and select regional offices and testing laboratories, if needed.

¹ NHTSA, U.S. Department of Transportation's 2019 Motor Vehicle Traffic Data, Early Estimates, May 2020.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 366-5630 or Wendy Harris, Program Director, at (202) 366-2794.

cc: DOT Audit Liaison, M-1
NHTSA Audit Liaison, NPO-310