

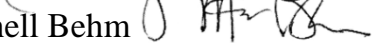


# Memorandum

U.S. Department of  
Transportation  
Office of the Secretary  
of Transportation  
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION:** Audit Announcement –  
Audit of NHTSA’s Efforts To Identify  
Safety-Related Vehicle Defects  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
Project No. 14M3004M000

Date: May 1, 2014

From: Mitchell Behm   
Assistant Inspector General for  
Surface Transportation Audits

Reply to JA-30  
Attn of:

To: Acting National Highway Traffic Safety Administrator

Since February 2014, General Motors Company (GM) has recalled 2.6 million vehicles manufactured between 2003 and 2011.<sup>1</sup> The recalled vehicles have a defective ignition switch that can unintentionally move from the “run” or “on” position to the “accessory” or “off” position, shutting down the engine and disabling power steering, power brakes, and airbags.

The Secretary of Transportation has requested that we undertake a review of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s (NHTSA) safety functions and processes related to the GM recall. Accordingly, we are initiating an audit to (1) assess NHTSA’s procedures for collecting, analyzing, and managing information to identify safety-related vehicle defects, (2) determine if information on ignition switch issues or non-deploying airbags was available to NHTSA but not used in the GM defect analysis, and (3) determine whether NHTSA has completed actions to implement our 2011 recommendations to strengthen its processes for identifying and addressing vehicle safety defects.<sup>2</sup>

We plan to begin the audit immediately and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. The audit will take place at DOT Headquarters and other sites as needed. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at (202) 366-5630, or Wendy Harris, Program Director, at (202) 366-2794.

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

<sup>1</sup> Recalled vehicles have included the Chevrolet Cobalt and HHR, Saturn Ion and Sky, and Pontiac G5 and Solstice.

<sup>2</sup> *Process Improvements Are Needed for Identifying and Addressing Vehicle Safety Defects* (OIG Report Number MH-2012-001), Oct. 6, 2011. OIG reports are available on our Web site at [www.oig.dot.gov](http://www.oig.dot.gov).