



# Memorandum

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

Subject: INFORMATION: Notification of Audit of Office  
of Vehicle Safety Compliance  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
Project Number: 04M3005M000

Date: March 2, 2004

From: Debra S. Ritt  
Assistant Inspector General  
for Surface and Maritime Programs

Reply to JA-40  
Attn. of:

To: National Highway Traffic Safety Administrator

The Office of Inspector General is initiating an audit of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) efforts to monitor the importation of foreign manufactured vehicles that are not certified by their original manufacturers as complying with the Federal motor vehicle safety standards. We understand some importers are concerned about the length of time it takes NHTSA to process petitions for allowing entry of these vehicles into the United States.

The objectives of this audit are to: (1) evaluate the timeliness of NHTSA's processing of petitions, assigning of eligibility numbers, and handling of hardship exemptions for military personnel and other individuals; and (2) determine the reasons that importers may be experiencing delays in obtaining NHTSA's approval to import vehicles. Depending on initial audit results, we may expand the scope to further explore the issues identified.

We have already met with your staff, and plan to begin the audit immediately. We will conduct audit work at NHTSA Headquarters and field locations as appropriate. Please contact me at (202) 493-0331 if I can answer any questions or be of further assistance.

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cc: Audit Liaison, OST  
Audit Liaison, NHTSA