

2. Occupant capacity information is provided to help customers avoid exceeding tire load limits. These errors will not contribute to overloading because the correct vehicle weight capacity is provided. The seating capacity is understated. The correct tire pressure information is also provided and the tire load limit will not be exceeded with all seating positions occupied; and

3. A customer would look at the number of seats and the number of safety belts in a car to determine its capacity, rather than look at the placard. If a customer does read the seat capacity numbers on the tire placard, it will be obvious that the numbers are incorrect because the sum of the seat numbers will not equal the total number of the label. It is unlikely that anyone will be confused about the seat capacity of these cars after looking at the seats and safety belts. The purpose for the labeling requirements in FMVSS No. 110 is to provide the vehicle user with information for the safe operation of the vehicle by having a placard, permanently affixed to the glove compartment door or an equally accessible location, that displays the designated seating capacity, in terms of the total number of occupants and the number of occupants for each seat location. This information is used to identify the number of seating positions designed by the vehicle's manufacturer and to prevent overloading. In this case, GM understated the number of occupants that the vehicle can carry; therefore, overloading is not an issue. In addition, the correct vehicle capacity weight, recommended cold tire inflation pressure, and recommended tire size designation information are provided.

In consideration of the foregoing, NHTSA has decided that the applicant has met its burden of persuasion that the noncompliance it describes is inconsequential to safety. Accordingly, its application is granted, and the applicant is exempted from providing the notification of the noncompliance that is required by 49 U.S.C. 30118, and from remedying the noncompliance, as required by 49 U.S.C. 30120.

(49 U.S.C. 30118, delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8).

(49 U.S.C. 30118, 30120, delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8).

Issued on: February 10, 1999.

Robert Shelton,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

[FR Doc. 99-3762 Filed 2-16-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-59-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-98-4683; Notice 01]

RIN 2127-AH35

Preliminary Theft Data; Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Standard

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Publication of preliminary theft data; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This document requests comments on data about passenger motor vehicle thefts that occurred in calendar year (CY) 1997, including theft rates for existing passenger motor vehicle lines manufactured in model year (MY) 1997. The theft data preliminarily indicate that the vehicle theft rate for CY/MY 1997 vehicles (3.11 thefts per thousand vehicles) decreased by 5.2 percent from the theft rate for CY/MY 1996 vehicles (3.28 thefts per thousand vehicles).

Publication of these data fulfills NHTSA's statutory obligation to periodically obtain accurate and timely theft data, and publish the information for review and comment.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before April 19, 1999.

ADDRESSES: All comments should refer to the docket number and notice number cited in the heading of this document and be submitted, preferably with two copies to: U.S. Department of Transportation, Dockets, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Docket hours are from 10 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Rosalind Proctor, Office of Planning and Consumer Programs, NHTSA, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. Ms. Proctor's telephone number is (202) 366-0846. Her fax number is (202) 493-2739.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NHTSA administers a program for reducing motor vehicle theft. The central feature of this program is the Federal Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Standard, 49 CFR part 541. The standard specifies performance requirements for inscribing or affixing vehicle identification numbers (VINs) onto certain major original equipment and replacement parts of high-theft lines of passenger motor vehicles.

The agency is required by 49 U.S.C. 33104(b)(4) to periodically obtain, from the most reliable source, accurate and

timely theft data, and publish the data for review and comment. To fulfill the section 33104(b)(4) mandate, this document reports the preliminary theft data for CY 1997, the most recent calendar year for which data are available.

In calculating the 1997 theft rates, NHTSA followed the same procedures it used in calculating the MY 1996 theft rates. (For 1996 theft data calculations, see 63 FR 36478, July 6, 1998). As in all previous reports, NHTSA's data were based on information provided to the agency by the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The NCIC is a governmental system that receives vehicle theft information from nearly 23,000 criminal justice agencies and other law enforcement authorities throughout the United States. The NCIC data also include reported thefts of self-insured and uninsured vehicles, not all of which are reported to other data sources.

The 1997 theft rate for each vehicle line was calculated by dividing the number of reported thefts of MY 1997 vehicles of that line stolen during calendar year 1997, by the total number of vehicles in that line manufactured for MY 1997, as reported by manufacturers to the Environmental Protection Agency.

The preliminary 1997 theft data show a decrease in the vehicle theft rate when compared to the theft rate experienced in CY/MY 1996. The preliminary theft rate for MY 1997 passenger vehicles stolen in calendar year 1997 decreased to 3.11 thefts per thousand vehicles produced, a decrease of 5.2 percent from the rate of 3.28 thefts per thousand vehicles experienced by MY 1996 vehicles in CY 1996. For MY 1997 vehicles, out of a total of 203 vehicle lines, 71 lines had a theft rate higher than 3.5826 per thousand vehicles, the established median theft rate for MYs 1990/1991. (See 59 FR 12400, March 16, 1994). Of the 71 vehicle lines with a theft rate higher than 3.5826, 61 are passenger car lines, nine are multipurpose passenger vehicle lines, and one is a light-duty truck line.

In Table I, NHTSA has tentatively ranked each of the MY 1997 vehicle lines in descending order of theft rate. Public comment is sought on the accuracy of the data, including the data for the production volumes of individual vehicle lines.

Comments must not exceed 15 pages in length (49 CFR 553.21). Attachments may be appended to these submissions without regard to the 15 page limit. This limitation is intended to encourage

commenters to detail their primary arguments in a concise fashion.

If a commenter wishes to submit certain information under a claim of confidentiality, three copies of the complete submission, including purportedly confidential business information, should be submitted to the Chief Counsel, NHTSA, at the street address given above, and two copies from which the purportedly confidential information has been deleted should be submitted to Dockets. A request for confidentiality should be accompanied by a cover letter setting forth the

information specified in the agency's confidential business information regulation. 49 CFR part 512.

All comments received before the close of business on the comment closing date indicated above for this document will be considered, and will be available for examination in the docket at the above address both before and after that date. To the extent possible, comments filed after the closing date will also be considered. Comments on this document will be available for inspection in the docket. NHTSA will continue to file relevant

information as it becomes available for inspection in the docket after the closing date, and it is recommended that interested persons continue to examine the docket for new material.

Those persons desiring to be notified upon receipt of their comments in the rules docket should enclose a self-addressed, stamped postcard in the envelope with their comments. Upon receiving the comments, the docket supervisor will return the postcard by mail.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 33101, 33102 and 33104; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50.

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THEFT RATES OF 1997 MODEL YEAR PASSENGER MOTOR VEHICLES STOLEN IN CALENDAR YEAR 1997

Manufacturer	Make/model (line)	Thefts 1997	Production (Mfr's) 1997	1997 (per 1,000 vehicles produced) theft rate
1 SUZUKI	SWIFT	16	1,724	9.2807
2 HONDA	ACURA INTEGRA	277	30,046	9.2192
3 CHRYSLER CORP	PLYMOUTH NEON	749	82,880	9.0372
4 MITSUBISHI	MIRAGE	497	58,218	8.5369
5 CHRYSLER CORP	DODGE NEON	926	115,456	8.0204
6 TOYOTA	SUPRA	13	1,629	7.9804
7 HYUNDAI	TIBURON	37	4,758	7.7764
8 SUZUKI	ESTEEM	55	7,116	7.7291
9 MITSUBISHI	MONTERO SPORT	202	26,592	7.5963
10 BMW	8	6	791	7.5853
11 TOYOTA	LEXUS SC	41	5,570	7.3609
12 CHRYSLER CORP	DODGE STRATUS	711	97,227	7.3128
13 NISSAN	MAXIMA	949	131,602	7.2111
14 CHRYSLER CORP	STRATUS ¹	3	429	6.9930
15 MITSUBISHI	MONTERO	82	12,249	6.6944
16 CHRYSLER CORP	INTREPID ¹	4	616	6.4935
17 NISSAN	STANZA ALTIMA	1,157	179,501	6.4456
18 CHRYSLER CORP	PLYMOUTH BREEZE	423	70,699	5.9831
19 MITSUBISHI	3000GT	38	6,399	5.9384
20 GENERAL MOTORS	GEO METRO	374	64,933	5.7598
21 MITSUBISHI	ECLIPSE	439	77,556	5.6604
22 MITSUBISHI	GALANT	282	50,259	5.6109
23 TOYOTA	TERCEL	277	49,527	5.5929
24 CHRYSLER CORP	NEW YORKER/LHS	203	36,622	5.5431
25 FORD MOTOR CO	MERCURY MYSTIQUE	126	23,321	5.4029
26 FORD MOTOR CO	MERCURY TRACER	354	65,867	5.3745
27 SUBARU	SVX	2	384	5.2083
28 MERCEDES BENZ	140 (S-CLASS)	85	16,348	5.1994
29 CHRYSLER CORP	DODGE INTREPID	775	151,603	5.1120
30 MERCEDES BENZ	129 (SL-CLASS)	36	7,172	5.0195
31 CHRYSLER CORP	SEBRING CONVERTIBLE	280	56,004	4.9996
32 HYUNDAI	SONATA	90	18,035	4.9903
33 HONDA	ACURA SLX	5	1,003	4.9850
34 SUZUKI	SIDEKICK	110	22,312	4.9301
35 TOYOTA	COROLLA	1,091	222,055	4.9132
36 GENERAL MOTORS	CHEVROLET CAMARO	270	55,037	4.9058
37 FORD MOTOR CO	MUSTANG	490	100,259	4.8873
38 HYUNDAI	ACCENT	174	37,755	4.6087
39 NISSAN	PATHFINDER	382	83,550	4.5721
40 GENERAL MOTORS	GEO PRIZM	285	62,800	4.5382
41 BMW	M3	35	7,976	4.3882
42 CHRYSLER CORP	CIRRUS	121	28,008	4.3202
43 CHRYSLER CORP	JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE	1,122	259,946	4.3163
44 GENERAL MOTORS	PONTIAC FIREBIRD/FORMULA	133	30,819	4.3155
45 FORD MOTOR CO	ASPIRE	161	37,398	4.3050
46 ASTON MARTIN	DB7	1	234	4.2735
47 ISUZU	HOMBRE PICKUP TRUCK	52	12,177	4.2703
48 HONDA	ACCORD	1,604	375,973	4.2663
49 CHRYSLER CORP	SEBRING COUPE	140	33,163	4.2216
50 SUZUKI	X-90	9	2,182	4.1247

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THEFT RATES OF 1997 MODEL YEAR PASSENGER MOTOR VEHICLES STOLEN IN CALENDAR YEAR 1997—Continued

Manufacturer	Make/model (line)	Thefts 1997	Production (Mfr's) 1997	1997 (per 1,000 vehicles produced) theft rate	
51	NISSAN	240SX	15	3,655	4.1040
52	FORD MOTOR CO	CONTOUR	327	79,945	4.0903
53	NISSAN	SENTRA/200SX	628	154,689	4.0598
54	GENERAL MOTORS	OLDSMOBILE ACHIEVA	201	49,879	4.0298
55	CHRYSLER CORP	NEON ¹	3	751	3.9947
56	TOYOTA	4-RUNNER	512	128,659	3.9795
57	HYUNDAI	ELANTRA	178	44,936	3.9612
58	GENERAL MOTORS	PONTIAC GRAND AM	834	211,009	3.9524
59	FORD MOTOR CO	ESCORT	1,264	323,413	3.9083
60	MAZDA	626/MX-6	320	82,223	3.8919
61	GENERAL MOTORS	GMC JIMMY S-15	284	73,493	3.8643
62	HONDA	DEL SOL	25	6,719	3.7208
63	FORD MOTOR CO	PROBE	62	16,823	3.6854
64	MERCEDES BENZ	202 (C-CLASS)	44	11,949	3.6823
65	GENERAL MOTORS	BUICK SKYLARK	212	57,716	3.6732
66	CHRYSLER CORP	EAGLE TALON	36	9,827	3.6634
67	ISUZU	RODEO	190	52,937	3.5892
68	CHRYSLER CORP	EAGLE VISION	21	5,888	3.5666
69	GENERAL MOTORS	CHEVROLET CORVETTE	32	9,072	3.5273
70	MAZDA	MILLENNIA	58	17,130	3.3859
71	MITSUBISHI	DIAMANTE	95	28,208	3.3678
72	NISSAN	INFINITI I30	92	27,606	3.3326
73	FORD MOTOR CO	TAURUS	1,322	398,720	3.3156
74	NISSAN	INFINITI QX4	54	16,558	3.2613
75	ISUZU	TROOPER	34	10,616	3.2027
76	FORD MOTOR CO	LINCOLN TOWN CAR	328	104,969	3.1247
77	CHRYSLER CORP	DODGE AVENGER	101	32,698	3.0889
78	GENERAL MOTORS	CHEVROLET CAVALIER	969	316,265	3.0639
79	TOYOTA	TACOMA PICKUP TRUCK	333	109,056	3.0535
80	CHRYSLER CORP	JEEP WRANGLER	382	125,276	3.0493
81	KIA	SEPHIA	130	42,709	3.0439
82	FORD MOTOR CO	MERCURY SABLE	340	114,227	2.9765
83	MAZDA	MX-5 MIATA	55	18,536	2.9672
84	GENERAL MOTORS	CHEVROLET BLAZER S10/T10	624	212,327	2.9389
85	FORD MOTOR CO	LINCOLN MARK VIII	48	16,339	2.9378
86	HONDA	PRELUDE	48	16,584	2.8944
87	GENERAL MOTORS	PONTIAC SUNFIRE	305	105,493	2.8912
88	GENERAL MOTORS	CADILLAC DEVILLE	274	95,151	2.8796
89	VOLVO	960	52	18,140	2.8666
90	PORSCHE	911	18	6,289	2.8621
91	HONDA	PASSPORT	62	21,693	2.8581
92	HONDA	CIVIC	933	335,167	2.7837
93	MAZDA	PROTÉGÉ	159	57,153	2.7820
94	FORD MOTOR CO	EXPLORER	1,105	398,992	2.7695
95	FORD MOTOR CO	WINDSTAR VAN	98	36,315	2.6986
96	JAGUAR	XJ6	21	7,899	2.6586
97	VOLKSWAGEN	GOLF/GTI	59	22,684	2.6010
98	ACURA	TL	55	21,441	2.5652
99	TOYOTA	CAMRY	935	365,752	2.5564
100	GENERAL MOTORS	PONTIAC BONNEVILLE	186	74,182	2.5073
101	TOYOTA	PASEO	8	3,194	2.5047
102	TOYOTA	PREVIA VAN	12	4,840	2.4793
103	CHRYSLER CORP	PLYMOUTH PROWLER	1	404	2.4752
104	BMW	7	43	17,788	2.4174
105	FORD MOTOR CO	THUNDERBIRD	178	73,812	2.4115
106	GENERAL MOTORS	OLDSMOBILE CUTLASS SUPREME	127	53,434	2.3768
107	TOYOTA	LEXUS ES	138	59,344	2.3254
108	GENERAL MOTORS	CHEVROLET LUMINA/MONTE CARLO	696	304,270	2.2874
109	MERCEDES BENZ	210 (E-CLASS)	114	50,101	2.2754
110	VOLKSWAGEN	PASSAT	26	11,437	2.2733
111	VOLKSWAGEN	JETTA	208	91,809	2.2656
112	NISSAN	PICKUP TRUCK	286	130,665	2.1888
113	BMW	3	93	42,643	2.1809
114	HONDA	ACURA CL	98	44,955	2.1800
115	CHRYSLER CORP	PLYMOUTH VOYAGER	325	149,874	2.1685
116	GENERAL MOTORS	GMC SAFARI VAN	68	31,673	2.1469
117	GENERAL MOTORS	CHEVROLET ASTRO VAN	213	100,116	2.1275
118	NISSAN	INFINITI J30	23	10,817	2.1263

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THEFT RATES OF 1997 MODEL YEAR PASSENGER MOTOR VEHICLES STOLEN IN CALENDAR
YEAR 1997—Continued

Manufacturer	Make/model (line)	Thefts 1997	Production (Mfr's) 1997	1997 (per 1,000 vehicles produced) theft rate	
119	TOYOTA	LEXUS LS	38	17,900	2.1229
120	GENERAL MOTORS	GMC SONOMA PICKUP TRUCK	82	38,759	2.1156
121	JAGUAR	XJR	1	473	2.1142
122	TOYOTA	RAV4	154	73,321	2.1004
123	BMW	5	86	41,665	2.0641
124	TOYOTA	T100 PICKUP TRUCK	62	30,389	2.0402
125	TOYOTA	CELICA	26	12,901	2.0153
126	GENERAL MOTORS	GEO TRACKER	49	24,400	2.0082
127	GENERAL MOTORS	OLDSMOBILE BRAVADA	54	27,722	1.9479
128	CHRYSLER CORP	CONCORDE	99	51,119	1.9367
129	CHRYSLER CORP	DODGE CARAVAN	559	290,007	1.9275
130	GENERAL MOTORS	PONTIAC GRAND PRIX	275	144,767	1.8996
131	KIA	SPORTAGE	44	23,500	1.8723
132	JAGUAR	XK8	15	8,242	1.8199
133	TOYOTA	AVALON	132	73,991	1.7840
134	GENERAL MOTORS	CADILLAC ELDORADO	34	19,307	1.7610
135	GENERAL MOTORS	BUICK RIVIERA	31	18,175	1.7056
136	VOLVO	850	72	42,596	1.6903
137	SAAB	9000	9	5,449	1.6517
138	PORSCHE	BOXSTER CONVERTIBLE	9	5,459	1.6487
139	BMW	Z3	34	20,636	1.6476
140	CHRYSLER CORP	JEEP CHEROKEE	141	86,303	1.6338
141	FORD MOTOR CO	RANGER PICKUP TRUCK	478	296,746	1.6108
142	VOLKSWAGEN	CABRIO	15	9,473	1.5834
143	GENERAL MOTORS	CHEVROLET S-10 PICKUP TRUCK	298	190,835	1.5616
144	AUDI	A6	12	7,736	1.5512
145	CHRYSLER CORP	DODGE DAKOTA PICKUP TRUCK	195	128,661	1.5156
146	FORD MOTOR CO	AEROSTAR VAN	78	53,721	1.4519
147	NISSAN	INFINITI Q45	18	12,398	1.4518
148	MAZDA	MPV	19	13,302	1.4284
149	FORD MOTOR CO	MERCURY COUGAR	50	35,273	1.4175
150	MAZDA	B SERIES PICKUP TRUCK	50	35,496	1.4086
151	NISSAN	QUEST	73	52,071	1.4019
152	GENERAL MOTORS	CADILLAC SEVILLE	52	37,187	1.3983
153	GENERAL MOTORS	CHEVROLET MALIBU	136	100,661	1.3511
154	FORD MOTOR CO	LINCOLN CONTINENTAL	43	32,204	1.3352
155	CHRYSLER CORP	TOWN & COUNTRY MPV	103	78,662	1.3094
156	GENERAL MOTORS	CADILLAC CATERA	34	26,109	1.3022
157	SUBARU	IMPREZA	34	26,817	1.2679
158	GENERAL MOTORS	SATURN SC	84	66,456	1.2640
159	GENERAL MOTORS	SATURN SL	251	199,018	1.2612
160	VOLKSWAGEN	EUROVAN	2	1,602	1.2484
161	SUBARU	LEGACY	115	92,310	1.2458
162	FORD MOTOR CO	MERCURY VILLAGER MPV	64	61,417	1.0421
163	GENERAL MOTORS	OLDSMOBILE EIGHTY-EIGHT	68	65,879	1.0322
164	GENERAL MOTORS	OLDSMOBILE AURORA	26	25,579	1.0165
165	GENERAL MOTORS	PONTIAC TRANS SPORT VAN	47	47,627	0.9868
166	AUDI	A4	16	16,400	0.9756
167	FORD MOTOR CO	MERCURY GRAND MARQUIS	124	127,973	0.9690
168	SAAB	900	22	23,152	0.9502
169	HONDA	ACURA RL	15	16,377	0.9159
170	FORD MOTOR CO	CROWN VICTORIA	107	123,814	0.8642
171	AUDI	A8	2	2,377	0.8414
172	GENERAL MOTORS	SATURN SW	20	27,129	0.7372
173	GENERAL MOTORS	BUICK LESABRE	155	211,904	0.7315
174	GENERAL MOTORS	OLDSMOBILE CUTLASS	13	18,112	0.7178
175	HONDA	ODYSSEY	14	22,243	0.6294
176	ISUZU	OASIS	1	1,602	0.6242
177	HONDA	CR-V	44	73,948	0.5950
178	GENERAL MOTORS	OLDSMOBILE SILHOUETTE VAN	12	20,927	0.5734
179	GENERAL MOTORS	CHEVROLET VENTURE VAN	38	71,649	0.5304
180	GENERAL MOTORS	BUICK CENTURY	27	53,706	0.5027
181	GENERAL MOTORS	BUICK PARK AVENUE	28	59,549	0.4702
182	GENERAL MOTORS	BUICK REGAL	7	21,828	0.3207
183	AUDI	CABRIOLET	0	1,201	0.0000
184	CHRYSLER CORP	DODGE VIPER	0	1,537	0.0000
185	FERRARI	F355	0	622	0.0000
186	FERRARI	456	0	70	0.0000

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THEFT RATES OF 1997 MODEL YEAR PASSENGER MOTOR VEHICLES STOLEN IN CALENDAR YEAR 1997—Continued

Manufacturer	Make/model (line)	Thefts 1997	Production (Mfr's) 1997	1997 (per 1,000 vehicles produced) theft rate
187 FERRARI	550	0	94	0.0000
188 GENERAL MOTORS	BUICK FUNERAL COACH/HEARSE	0	546	0.0000
189 GENERAL MOTORS	CADILLAC LIMOUSINE	0	445	0.0000
190 GENERAL MOTORS	SATURN EV1	0	2,000	0.0000
191 HONDA	ACURA NSX	0	322	0.0000
192 JAGUAR	VANDEN PLAS	0	2,536	0.0000
193 LAMBORGHINI	DB132/DIABLO	0	74	0.0000
194 LOTUS	ESPRIT	0	121	0.0000
195 ROLLS-ROYCE	BENTLEY AZURE	0	81	0.0000
196 ROLLS—ROYCE	BENTLEY BROOKLANDS	0	135	0.0000
197 ROLLS—ROYCE	BENTLEY CONTINENTAL T	0	40	0.0000
198 ROLLS-ROYCE	BENTLEY TURBO R	0	54	0.0000
199 ROLLS-ROYCE	SILVER DAWN	0	21	0.0000
200 ROLLS-ROYCE	SILVER SPUR	0	113	0.0000
201 ROLLS-ROYCE	PARK WARD LIMOUSINE	0	1	0.0000
202 TOYOTA	LEXUS GS	0	187	0.0000
203 VECTOR AUTO	AVTECH SC/M12	0	4	0.0000

¹ These vehicles were manufactured for sale only in U.S. territories under the Chrysler name plate.

Issued on: February 10, 1999.

L. Robert Shelton,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

[FR Doc. 99-3671 Filed 2-16-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-59-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Petition for Exemption From the Vehicle Theft Prevention Standard; Ford

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Grant of petition for exemption.

SUMMARY: This notice grants in full the petition of Ford Motor Company (Ford) for an exemption of a high-theft line, the Ford Taurus, from the parts-marking requirements of the Federal Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Standard. This petition is granted because the agency has determined that the antitheft device to be placed on the line as standard equipment is likely to be as effective in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft as compliance with the parts-marking requirements of the Theft Prevention Standard.

DATES: The exemption granted by this notice is effective beginning with model year (MY) 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Rosalind Proctor, Office of Planning and Consumer Programs, NHTSA, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington DC

20590. Ms. Proctor's telephone number is (202) 366-0846. Her fax number is (202) 493-2739.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In a petition dated December 17, 1998, Ford requested an exemption from the parts marking requirements of the Theft Prevention Standard (49 CFR Part 541) for the Ford Taurus vehicle line beginning in MY 2000. The petition is pursuant to 49 CFR Part 543, Exemption From Vehicle Theft Prevention Standard, based on the installation of an antitheft device as standard equipment for the entire line.

Ford's submittal is considered a complete petition, as required by 49 CFR Part 543.7, in that it met the general requirements contained in § 543.5 and the specific content requirements of § 543.6.

In its petition, Ford provided a detailed description and diagram of the identity, design, and location of the components of the antitheft device for the new line. Ford will install its antitheft device, the SecuriLock Passive Anti-Theft Electronic Engine Immobilizer System (SecuriLock) as standard equipment on the MY 2000 Ford Taurus.

In order to ensure the reliability and durability of the device, Ford conducted tests, based on its own specified standards. Ford provided a detailed list of the tests conducted and stated its belief that the device is reliable and durable since it complied with Ford's specified requirements for each test. The environmental and functional tests conducted were for thermal shock, high temperature exposure, low-temperature

exposure, powered/thermal cycle, temperature/humidity cycling, constant humidity, end-of-line, functional, random vibration, tri-temperature parametric, bench drop, transmit current, lead/lock strength/integrity, output frequency, resistance to solvents, output field strength, dust, and electromagnetic compatibility.

The Ford SecuriLock is a transponder-based electronic immobilizer system. The device is activated when the driver/operator turns off the engine by using the properly coded ignition key. When the ignition key is turned to the start position, the transponder (located in the head of the key) transmits a code to the powertrain's electronic control module. The vehicle's engine can only be started if the transponder code matches the code previously programmed into the powertrain's electronic control module. If the code does not match, the engine will be disabled. Ford stated that there are seventy-two quadrillion different codes and each transponder is hard-coded with a unique code at the time of manufacture. Additionally, Ford stated that the communication between the SecuriLock control function and the powertrain's electronic control module is encrypted.

Ford stated that its SecuriLock system incorporates a theft indicator using a light-emitting diode (LED) that provides information to the driver/operator as to the "set" and "unset" condition of the device. When the ignition is initially turned to the "ON" position, a 3-second continuous LED indicates the proper "unset" state of the device. When the ignition is turned to "OFF", a flashing