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Ford transmissions being investigated

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The government today warned the owners of an estimated 9 million Ford cars and trucks that there may be a problem with the automatic transmissions which could cause the vehicles to slip into reverse while parked.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said it still has not determined whether such a defect exists. But it said based on its initial investigation it is issuing a consumer warning that owners of such cars should take precautions when they are parking.

Involved are an estimated 9 million cars and light trucks 1970 through 1978 models equipped with C6 or FMX automatic transmissions.

The NHTSA has reports of 770 accidents 259, injuries and 23 fatalities allegedly caused by automatic transmissions jumping from 'park' into 'reverse' gear," the agency said.

"Precautions to be taken include turning off the engine, pushing the gear selector all the way to the 'park' position and pulling on the selector lever without raising the lever to make sure it is secured and setting the parking brake," it added.

"Vehicles should never be left unattended with their engines running — or even for the brief period it may take to leave a vehicle to close a garage door, make a pickup at a store or check the mailbox at the end of your driveway," it said.

NHTSA also said it wants to hear, preferably in the form of a detailed letter, from owners who have had problems. They are asked to include the make, model and vehicle identification number on the dash board to NHTSA, Washington, D.C., 20590.

"We are pursuing this investigation on a priority basis and will complete it in the very near future," said Joan Claybrook, head of the agency.

"But at this time we want to report that a problem may exist between the park and reverse positions on the transmission selector system, leading the driver to erroneously believe the transmission is in park," she said. "This tendency to slip into reverse because of engine vibration on the closing of the door, if the transmission is not firmly engaged in park position."

Tarleton State's fine arts center running behind building schedule

Construction on Tarleton State University's new fine arts complex is now 30 percent complete and behind schedule, according to a spokesman for the Texas A&M University System.

The \$7 million, 85,000-square-foot building began construction last September. A target date of Oct. 12, 1979, has been set for completion.

"We lost 33 days due to ice, snow and cold weather back in winter," said Marcus Berg, A&M's on-site inspector. "The project is currently running behind schedule due to those and other factors."

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