

Public Release of EWR Data

Beginning Sept. 10, 2008, NHTSA modified its Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) website to facilitate the public availability of Early Warning Reporting (EWR) data. Manufacturers have been submitting EWR data since 2003. Previously, this information has been confidential. The EWR requirement was part of a legislative package approved by Congress following a 2000 Firestone tire recall. It provides additional information from manufacturers so NHTSA can quickly spot potential safety defects.

NHTSA has made this information available through a new search engine. The available EWR information includes data on death, injury and property damage claims (including lawsuits) submitted to the manufacturer, along with light vehicle production data. NHTSA is not making the information available in the exact manner in which it was received from the manufacturer. Instead we have enhanced its utility by providing the component categories utilizing the text definitions and not the two digit identifiers as submitted by manufacturers. Information on foreign recalls also is available. Some data will remain confidential, including warranty claims, consumer complaints to the manufacturer, field reports, common green tire information, production data for all except light vehicles, and the last six digits of the vehicle identification number in death and injury claims. ODI reviews all EWR data to spot potential safety defects.

Manufacturers must report any claim against and received by the manufacturer. Claims are merely requests or demands for relief related to a crash, the failure of a component or system, or a fire originating in or from a vehicle. These claims are unverified allegations. They may help NHTSA identify a possible defect, but in and of themselves the claims are not evidence of a defect.

The various categories of EWR data have proven to be a helpful supplement to NHTSA's more traditional sources of information, including consumer complaints submitted directly to the agency. As of October 1, 2011, NHTSA has used the EWR data in 225 investigations; 68 were launched because of EWR data alone; 157 were prompted by other information but supported by the EWR data.

New EWR information will be available quarterly. In addition, some historic EWR data will not be available until NHTSA acts on confidentiality requests from individual manufacturers.

Please note that currently available EWR information may change over time. Manufacturers are allowed to update their information whenever they become aware of a problem with their reported information. They are also required to update their reports for one year on incidents involving death or injury if the manufacturer becomes aware of the VIN/ TIN that was previously unknown or one or more of the specified systems or components that allegedly contributed to the incident.