



NEWS RELEASE

KidsAndCars.org

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New Data Contests NHTSA Findings, Exposes Real Danger of Vehicle Power Windows

WASHINGTON, D.C., November 2, 2009 – Research released today by KidsAndCars.org shows injuries to occupants in vehicles equipped with power windows to a number in the tens of millions, in sharp contrast to estimates by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) that put the number at less than 2,000. In its proposed rulemaking (NPRM) issued in August, the NHTSA concluded that, because so few people are injured by power windows, existing technology such as auto reversing systems (ARS) need not be mandated. With its new data that refutes the NHTSA’s estimates, KidsAndCars.org urges the NHTSA to reexamine its stance and require that ARS become standard on all vehicles sold in the U.S.

“Without question, vehicle safety for the citizens of this country is one of our main responsibilities,” said Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL). “As far as the dangerous potential of power windows is concerned, automakers have existing technology to prevent millions of injuries and deaths, and we should require them to utilize this preventive technology to save lives.”

The research, conducted via phone and online surveys, was commissioned by KidsAndCars.org and administered by the respected research firm Harris Interactive in October 2009 and found that:

- More than 13 million U.S. adults have injured someone they know by closing a car window**
- Over 22 million U.S. adults have been personally injured or know someone who has been personally injured by someone else closing a car window**
- Over 10 million U.S. adults have been personally injured by someone else closing a car window but did not seek medical care thus they were not included in any government data collection efforts**

In 2008 the Cameron Gulbransen Kids Transportation Safety Act (HR 1216) required the NHTSA to initiate rulemaking to consider prescribing ARS technology, which reverses a window when an obstruction is detected, to prevent vehicle passengers from being injured or killed by the force of power windows. Based on its research, the NHTSA approximates 1,943 injuries due to power windows and six deaths annually. However, the KidsAndCars.org data, based on a national sample, reveals a gross underestimation by the NHTSA and a significantly larger number of people who have been injured by power windows.

While current legislation mandates “pull-up to close” switches on all vehicles manufactured after October 1, 2010, it does not address third-party accidents, which occur when a driver operating the switch cannot see rear-seat passengers. As distracted driving becomes an escalating problem, drivers may suffer from longer response times, causing further injury to a passenger that may be trapped in a window and unable to speak.

We’ve known for a long time that millions of people are injured by power windows. When you bring up the topic, everyone has a story about an incident they are familiar with,” said Janette Fennell, KidsAndCars.org founder and

president. “And even though the NHTSA believes mandated ‘pull-up’ switches will rectify this issue by eliminating injuries caused by inadvertent activation of the window, our data proves that it is someone else in the vehicle that causes the majority of the injuries. Common sense, life-saving technology exists and can be easily implemented, as it has been on garage doors and elevators, to prevent senseless child deaths and injuries.”

Most power windows exert an upward force of 30-80 pounds; it takes only 22 pounds of force to suffocate or injure an infant. The ARS feature is a simple, \$6-per-window solution to prevent injuries and deaths. The technology is standard on most vehicles in Europe, including American cars sold there. However, the technology is on less than half of General Motors, Ford and Chrysler models in the U.S.

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About KidsAndCars.org: Founded in 1996, KidsAndCars.org is a national nonprofit child safety organization dedicated to preventing injuries and deaths of children in and around motor vehicles. KidAndCars.org promotes awareness among parents, caregivers and the general public about the dangers to children, including backover and frontover incidents, and heatstroke from being inadvertently left in a vehicle. The organization works to prevent tragedies through data collection, education and public awareness, policy change and survivor advocacy.