

GOVERNMENT STALLS ON REDUCING EJECTIONS:

**No Standard for Windows that Reduce Ejection Door Lock Retention;
Standard Remains Unchanged for over 30 Years**

Each year 7,300 people are killed each and nearly 8,000 are severely injured when partially or fully ejected through vehicle doors, windows and moon roofs. An estimated 1,300 lives could be saved each year by improving the strength of side and rear windows enough to retain occupants. And many of the 2,500 annual door ejection deaths could be prevented with upgraded locks and retention components that keep doors from flying open during crashes.

- Jan. 1, 1968 Standard 206 - Door Locks and Door Retention Components – takes effect and is aimed at “minimizing, the likelihood of occupants being thrown from the vehicle as a result of impact.”
- Jan. 26, 1981 NHTSA seeks public comment on the safety advantages of advanced window glazing (the addition of materials, such as plastic, to side and rear windows to increase elasticity of windows and decrease complete breakage of window upon impact).
- Aug. 1988 NHTSA issues two advanced notices of proposed rulemakings (ANPRMs) on side impact protection, seeking comment on increasing resistance to occupant ejection through side windows – one for both cars and another for light trucks (SUVs, pickups and vans). NHTSA conducts testing on improved glazing materials between 1988 and 1995.
- Jan. 3 1992 NHTSA publishes an ANPRM on rollover protection which includes discussion of preventing ejection through glazing during rollovers.
- June 1994 NHTSA cancels its proposed rule to establish a vehicle stability standard to reduce rollover crashes and promises to pursue multiple strategies to reduce occupant injury and its severity when vehicles do suffer rollovers. One of the initiatives is anti-ejection countermeasures including improved door locks and latches and window glazing.
- July 1995 NHTSA holds public meeting on improvements in door latch and lock standards and asks for public comments on the issue.
- Sept. 1995 NHTSA publishes final rule extending the requirements of the 1968 door lock standard to the back doors of passenger cars and multi-purpose vehicles (hatchbacks, station wagons, SUVs, and passenger vans) after finding that weak locks are often the cause of rear doors popping open in rear crashes and killing children.

- Nov. 1995 NHTSA issues “Ejection Mitigation Using Advanced Glazings: A Status Report”¹ on positive safety effects of anti-ejection glazing.
- Feb. 1, 1996 NHTSA holds public meeting on glazing and occupant ejection and to discuss the findings of the ejection mitigation status report released the previous November.
- Sept. 1999 NHTSA proposes that no doors open in frontal crash testing, but at least one door should be able to be opened following the test.
- Nov. 1999 NHTSA deletes proposed door retention/opening requirements.
- Nov. 1999 NHTSA issues “Ejection Mitigation Using Advanced Glazing, Status Report II.”² Findings in both the 1995 and 1999 status reports show that advanced glazing is capable of preventing approximately 1,300 fatalities per year and that feasible and practical prototypes exist.
- Nov. 2000 NHTSA issues an ANPRM on safety benefits of anti-ejection glazing.
- Nov. 2001 NHTSA issues a report, “Ejection Mitigation Using Advanced Glazing” to Congress, reversing its previous decision that the safety benefits of advanced glazing are very high.
- March 3-6, 2003 *Detroit News* series “Deadly Driving” highlights window strength and door locks/hinges as primary ways NHTSA could enhance safety. The report cites government statistics to show that between 537 and 1,305 fatalities could be prevented annually from improved side windows and that updated door latch standards could prevent hundreds of the 2,500 door-related ejection deaths each year.³
- Apr. 2002 NHTSA publishes its report “Characteristics of Fatal Rollover Crashes” and notes that 62 percent of occupants killed in vehicle rollovers were ejected during the crash and that only 23 percent of survivors of rollovers were ejected.
- June 18, 2002 NHTSA withdraws its side glazing rulemaking notices and closes the two dockets established in 1988. The chief decision to terminate was based on the finding of an increased risk of neck injury, yet the test used to measure neck injury was problematic and non-repeatable, and only one of a number of vehicles tested had these negative results.
- Feb. 2003 NHTSA proposes development of global technical regulation governing the design and performance of door locks, latches, and retention components pursuant to the 1998 U.N. Economic Commission for Europe Global Agreement.

- Feb. 26, 2003 Senate Commerce Committee holds a hearing on SUV safety where senators, auto industry representatives, the administrator of NHTSA and spokespeople from consumer safety groups speak about the problems of ejection in SUV rollovers.
- Dec. 2003 In NHTSA's 2003-2007 Priority plan, the agency promises to propose a rule upgrading door lock and latch design and performance by Apr. 2004 and a final rule by 2005.
- Feb. 12, 2004 Senate passes S.1072, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2003 (SAFETEA 2003), which includes safety provisions concerning ejection that would:
- Mandate a standard be set to reduce occupant ejection including the consideration of advanced side glazing, side curtain airbags and side impact airbags; and (Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) 6-30-2006, Final Rule not later than 18 months following NPRM);
 - Assure the creation of a standard that would require manufacturers to strengthen door locks, latches and retention components of doors to prevent occupant ejection (NPRM 6-30-2006, Final Rule not later than 18 months following NPRM).

¹ NHTSA Advanced Glazing Research Team; "Ejection Mitigation Using Advanced Glazing: A Status Report;" November 1995; NHTSA Docket 95-41 GR.

² NHTSA Advanced Glazing Research Team; "Ejection Mitigation Using Advanced Glazing, Status Report II, August 1999;" August 1999; NHTSA Docket 95-41 GR

³ Zagaroli, Lisa; "Agency quietly rejects stronger glass standard," *The Detroit News* March 3, 2003.