

# **POWER-OPERATED WINDOWS AND POWER SWITCHES:**

Over a Decade of Needless Child Injuries and Deaths

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- Apr. 1991 NHTSA issues rule adopting Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 118 to minimize the likelihood of death or injury from accidental operation of power windows, partitions and roof panels.
- 1991-1996 Evidence increases that power windows are nevertheless entrapping and injury small children, in particular, resulting either in deaths or serious injuries.
- Sept. 1995 NHTSA receives a petition to open rulemaking to adopt power window automatic reversal safety features and to amend the existing standard to prevent inadvertent power window closings.
- Aug. 1996 NHTSA proposes amending Standard No. 118 to permit, but not to require, infrared detection systems to stop power windows, partitions and roof panels from closing when there is an intervening object. NHTSA also asks if “express-up” power function should be allowed for power windows. Safety groups argue that prevention of power window and other panel entrapments should be required, not just permitted, and express doubts about the safety of “express-up” power window operation. No further rulemaking is conducted by NHTSA to date.
- Nov. 1996 NHTSA proposes a rule for controlling the ease with which a child can inadvertently trigger a power window switch. However, safety organizations point out in docket comments that the design restriction is not sufficient to stop children from activating switches with their elbows and therefore is inadequate. No further rulemaking is conducted by NHTSA.
- Jan. 2003 The Zoie Foundation petitions NHTSA to change the power switches on passenger vehicles to prevent children from being crushed by power windows. No reply has been received from the agency to date.
- Sept. 2003 Several major safety organizations petition NHTSA to change the standard to prevent dangerous power window closings by changing the power switch operation and also to require automatic reversal systems to prevent deaths and injuries. To date, no action has been taken on the merits of the petition.