

Products Liability Law Daily Wrap Up, NHTSA NEWS—ODI INVESTIGATIONS—NHTSA opens DP assessment regarding excessive frame corrosion in Toyota 4Runners, (Aug. 21, 2018)

Products Liability Law Daily Wrap Up

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By Colleen Kave, J.D.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) has received a Defect Petition requesting investigation of frame corrosion in model year 2002 through 2006 Toyota 4Runner vehicles. ODI will evaluate the petition, including the information provided by the petitioner and any other pertinent data (*NHTSA ODI Investigation*, No. [DP18-002](#), August 17, 2018).

On August 13, 2018, NHTSA received a letter from an individual alleging that while traveling on a two-lane highway in his 2005 4Runner, "without warning, the steering/suspension system separated from the frame due to excessive frame corrosion," resulting in difficulty controlling the vehicle. The Petitioner initially reported the failure to NHTSA in a May 26, 2018 complaint (VOQ 11098055). The petition asserted that the incident resulted from excessive and premature corrosion and cited as evidence: 1) other complaints of "premature and excessive frame corrosion" in 2002 through 2006 4Runner vehicles in NHTSA's on-line complaint database; and 2) a recent class-action settlement involving "1.5 million Tacoma, Tundra, and Sequoia trucks also built on a frame," which the petitioner alleged did not include the 4Runner vehicles "simply because there were insufficient complaints known to the counsel representing the class at the time it was formed."

The petition's scope includes third (model year 1996-2002) and fourth (model year 2003-2009) generation Toyota 4Runner vehicles. A preliminary analysis of available complaints and field reports by NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) has identified no crashes or injuries related to corroded frame or suspension components in these vehicles.

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