

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration****49 CFR Part 541**

[Docket No. NHTSA-03-14452; Notice 01]

RIN 2127-AJ00

Preliminary Theft Data; Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Standard

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Publication of preliminary theft data; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This document requests comments on data about passenger motor vehicle thefts that occurred in calendar year (CY) 2001 including theft rates for existing passenger motor vehicle lines manufactured in model year (MY) 2001. The theft data preliminarily indicate that the vehicle theft rate for CY/MY 2001 vehicles (3.26 thefts per thousand vehicles) increased by 12.8 percent from the theft rate for CY/MY 2000 vehicles (2.89 thefts per thousand vehicles).

Publication of these data fulfills NHTSA's statutory obligation to periodically obtain accurate and timely theft data, and publish the information for review and comment.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before June 16, 2003.

ADDRESSES: All comments should refer to the docket number and notice number cited in the heading of this document and be submitted, preferably with two copies to: U.S. Department of Transportation, Dockets, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Docket hours are from 10 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Deborah Mazyck, Office of Planning and Consumer Standards, NHTSA, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Ms. Mazyck's telephone number is (202) 366-0846. Her fax number is (202) 493-2290.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NHTSA administers a program for reducing motor vehicle theft. The central feature of this program is the Federal Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Standard, 49 CFR part 541. The standard specifies

performance requirements for inscribing or affixing vehicle identification numbers (VINs) onto certain major original equipment and replacement parts of high-theft lines of passenger motor vehicles.

The agency is required by 49 U.S.C. 33104(b)(4) to periodically obtain, from the most reliable source, accurate and timely theft data, and publish the data for review and comment. To fulfill the § 33104(b)(4) mandate, this document reports the preliminary theft data for CY 2001, the most recent calendar year for which data are available.

In calculating the 2001 theft rates, NHTSA followed the same procedures it used in calculating the MY 2000 theft rates. (For 2000 theft data calculations, see 67 FR 53756, August 19, 2002). As in all previous reports, NHTSA's data were based on information provided to the agency by the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The NCIC is a governmental system that receives vehicle theft information from nearly 23,000 criminal justice agencies and other law enforcement authorities throughout the United States. The NCIC data also include reported thefts of self-insured and uninsured vehicles, not all of which are reported to other data sources.

The 2001 theft rate for each vehicle line was calculated by dividing the number of reported thefts of MY 2001 vehicles of that line stolen during calendar year 2001, by the total number of vehicles in that line manufactured for MY 2001, as reported by manufacturers to the Environmental Protection Agency.

The preliminary 2001 theft data show an increase in the vehicle theft rate when compared to the theft rate experienced in CY/MY 2000. The preliminary theft rate for MY 2001 passenger vehicles stolen in calendar year 2001 increased to 3.26 thefts per thousand vehicles produced, an increase of 12.8 percent from the rate of 2.89 thefts per thousand vehicles experienced by MY 2000 vehicles in CY 2000. For MY 2001 vehicles, out of a total of 217 vehicle lines, 68 lines had a theft rate higher than 3.5826 per thousand vehicles, the established median theft rate for MYs 1990/1991. (See 59 FR 12400, March 16, 1994). Of the 68 vehicle lines with a theft rate higher than 3.5826, 56 are passenger car

lines, 12 are multipurpose passenger vehicle lines, and none are light-duty truck lines.

In Table I, NHTSA has tentatively ranked each of the MY 2001 vehicle lines in descending order of theft rate. Public comment is sought on the accuracy of the data, including the data for the production volumes of individual vehicle lines.

Comments must not exceed 15 pages in length (49 CFR part 553.21). Attachments may be appended to these submissions without regard to the 15 page limit. This limitation is intended to encourage commenters to detail their primary arguments in a concise fashion.

If a commenter wishes to submit certain information under a claim of confidentiality, three copies of the complete submission, including purportedly confidential business information, should be submitted to the Chief Counsel, NHTSA, at the street address given above, and two copies from which the purportedly confidential information has been deleted should be submitted to Dockets. A request for confidentiality should be accompanied by a cover letter setting forth the information specified in the agency's confidential business information regulation. 49 CFR part 512.

All comments received before the close of business on the comment closing date indicated above for this document will be considered, and will be available for examination in the docket at the above address both before and after that date. To the extent possible, comments filed after the closing date will also be considered. Comments on this document will be available for inspection in the docket. NHTSA will continue to file relevant information as it becomes available for inspection in the docket after the closing date, and it is recommended that interested persons continue to examine the docket for new material.

Those persons desiring to be notified upon receipt of their comments in the rules docket should enclose a self-addressed, stamped postcard in the envelope with their comments. Upon receiving the comments, the docket supervisor will return the postcard by mail.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 33101, 33102 and 33104; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50.