



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Memorandum

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

Subject: Test Request: Evaluation of Rear
Outboard Tail Lamp Assembly/Overheating Ground
Wires

Date: JAN 22 2010

From: Kathleen C. DeMeter, Director
Office of Defects Investigation

Reply to: NVS-212am
Attn of: EA09-019

To: Roger Saul, Director
Vehicle Research and Test Center

Original Signed By

This memorandum requests the Vehicle Research and Test Center (VRTC) to conduct the testing and evaluation as described below.

BACKGROUND: The Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) is conducting an Engineering Analysis (EA09-019) concerning rear outboard tail lamp illumination in model year (MY) 2002-2005 BMW 3 Series (E46) sedans. Complainants have stated that while driving the vehicle, the outboard tail lamp assemblies' associated ground wiring and 8-pin connectors can overheat, resulting in loss of all tail lamp illumination. As of January 2010, there have been 25 VOQ reports associated with the alleged defect in the subject vehicles, and BMW warranty data shows a significant level of failures in service usage.

OBJECTIVES: The objective of this test program is to evaluate the performance of the tail lamp assembly ground wiring and 8-pin connector. ODI would like to determine if the existing design used in the subject vehicles is sufficient for the tail lamp assembly to adequately illuminate all associated lighting within the tail lamp assembly. A survey of subject vehicle owners local to the VRTC facility may be beneficial.

METHODOLOGY/TEST PROCEDURES: VRTC should determine the methodology and test procedures necessary to meet the objectives of this test program. The testing shall include subjecting the ground wiring to various voltage and currents using a method to be determined after consultation with the ODI engineer, recording the power requirements and electrical system functionality, assessing any temperature affects and determining the difficulty in replicating the alleged failure condition.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The project engineer at ODI is Ali Motamedamin who will discuss the details of this test request with VRTC.

SCHEDULE: We would like to have the testing completed by June 30, 2010.



NHTSA:NVS:ODI

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