



---

Section-by-Section Summary of the  
**VEHICLE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2014**  
Rep. Jan Schakowsky (IL-9), Committee on Energy and Commerce

---

**TITLE I – INCREASED AND IMPROVED PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

**Section 101. Increased Public Availability of Vehicle Safety Information**

Requires NHTSA to make more vehicle safety information public, by: (a) posting on its website certain manufacturer communications (including technical service bulletins) regarding a safety-related defect or noncompliance; (b) publicly disclosing all Early Warning information submitted by manufacturers, unless exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act; and (c) providing, every six months, summaries of the agency's inquiries to manufacturers seeking additional information about fatal incidents.

**Section 102. Improved Vehicle Safety Databases**

Requires NHTSA to improve vehicle safety data posted to its website by ensuring that all such data, including Early Warning information, is readily searchable and can be aggregated and downloaded.

**TITLE II – ENHANCED AGENCY TOOLS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Section 201. Civil Penalties**

Increases the penalties NHTSA can seek per violation and eliminates, in most cases, the statutory maximum penalty for a related series of violations of federal motor vehicle safety laws.

**Section 202. Early Warning Reporting Requirements**

Strengthens the Early Warning Reporting program in the following ways:

- (a) Ensures that NHTSA requires manufacturers to submit consumer complaints, warranty claims, and field reports to the extent they assist in the identification of defects, and eliminates a statutory provision that could discourage manufacturers from collecting essential safety data;
- (b) Requires manufacturers to include, in their quarterly submissions to NHTSA, additional information on fatal incidents possibly caused by a defect and assess why the incident may have occurred;
- (c) Instructs NHTSA to improve reporting categories for vehicle components contributing to an incident, by maximizing interoperability with consumer complaint data, precision, and organization;
- (d) Directs NHTSA to review manufacturers' differing Early Warning reporting practices, including the extent to which the differences may be detrimental to the identification of defects related to motor vehicle safety, and grants NHTSA the authority to issue guidelines to standardize these practices; and
- (e) Requires the DOT Inspector General to review NHTSA policies to ensure that manufacturers submit all required Early Warning information in full and without delay, assess the extent to which manufacturers comply, and report to Congress findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

**Section 203. Administrative Accountability**

Improves administrative accountability related to: (a) petitions for standards and enforcement, by requiring NHTSA to explain any missed deadlines for responding to a petition and by allowing individuals to appeal a petition denial in a court of appeals; and (b) information provided by whistleblowers, by requiring the agency to promptly review and evaluate the information and by prohibiting the agency from disclosing it to manufacturers, among others, without the submitter's consent.

**Section 204. Imminent Hazard Authority**

Provides NHTSA with the authority to expedite a recall order in the case of any condition that substantially increases the likelihood of serious injury or death if not remedied immediately.

**Section 205. Cooperation with Foreign Governments**

Permits the Secretary of Transportation, in coordination with the Department of State, to enter into cooperative agreements and collaborative research and development agreements with foreign governments for the purposes of motor vehicle safety research, development, and testing and related data analysis.

**Section 206. Pedestrian Safety Improvement**

Requires NHTSA to establish standards for passenger motor vehicles to reduce the number of injuries and fatalities suffered by pedestrians and other non-occupants struck by such vehicles.

**Section 207. Regional Recalls Limitation**

Clarifies that all recalls of motor vehicles and replacement equipment must be carried out on a national basis and shall not be limited to vehicles or equipment in certain U.S. states, territories, or regions.

**TITLE III – CONSUMER PROTECTION**

**Section 301. Limitation on Sale or Lease of Used Motor Vehicles**

Prohibits a dealer from selling or leasing a used motor vehicle until the dealer gives the purchaser or lessee (and they acknowledge receiving) a notification of any defect or noncompliance not yet remedied.

**Section 302. Retention of Safety Records by Manufacturers**

Directs NHTSA to extend from five years to 20 years the time manufacturers must retain all motor vehicle safety records concerning possible safety-related malfunctions or communications about potential defects.

**Section 303. Recall Obligations Under Bankruptcy**

Ensures that manufacturers in bankruptcy must uphold their safety obligations even in the case of liquidation. Current law applies only to manufacturers engaged in a bankruptcy reorganization.

**TITLE IV – ADDITIONAL PROVISION**

**Section 401. Deadlines**

Establishes procedures for NHTSA if it cannot meet the deadlines provided in the bill.