

Exhaust system means more than mufflers

Automobile mechanics are learning to put high priority on checking out the condition of a car's exhaust system in their search for the cause of a variety of mechanical functions.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's National High-

way Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) says it has received a number of owner reports which cite defective exhaust systems as the cause of seemingly unrelated mechanical problems.

NHTSA cited the case of an

owner who suffered repeated failures of his taillight equipment, each time experiencing electrical system failures or dangerous night-driving black-outs.

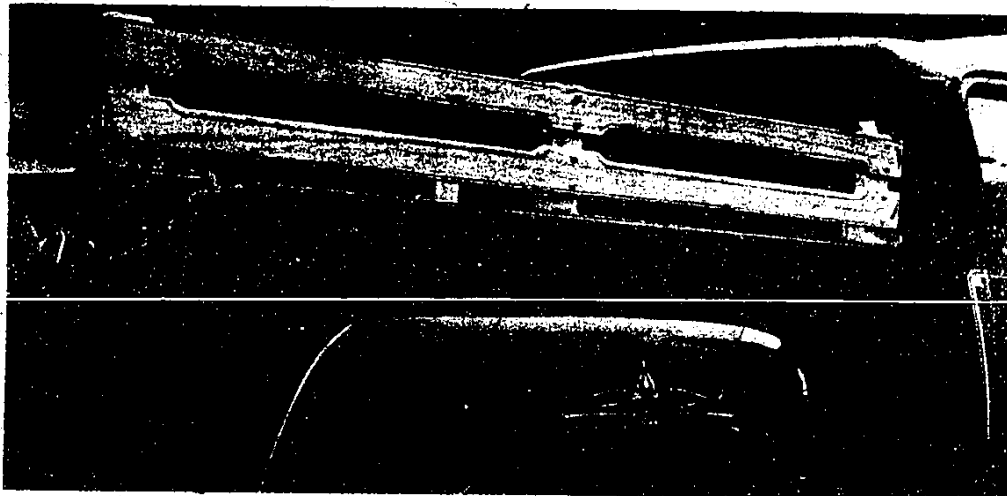
After costly repairs and several dangerous incidents on the

highway, it was discovered that a defective tailpipe allowed hot exhaust gases to melt away electrical insulation and plastic portions of the taillight assembly.

In another case, NHTSA reports that an owner became alarmed at the strong odor of gasoline given off during an extended trip. The motorist discovered a stream of pressurized gasoline being vented from his fuel tank and, when the filler cap was removed, a large amount of fuel was blown out of the filler neck.

At fault was a broken tailpipe section which allowed hot gases to heat the fuel tank. The expansion which resulted caused a continual leakage of fuel, forced from the tank under pressure.

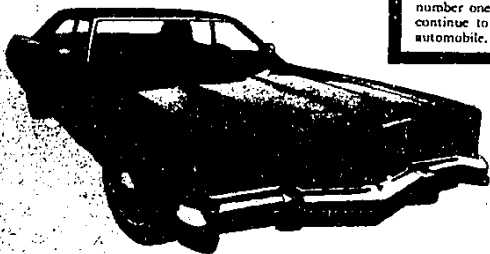
NHTSA warns that any opening in the vehicle underbody, firewall or body seals, together with any exhaust system fault allowing fumes to accumulate under the vehicle, may be a lethal combination.



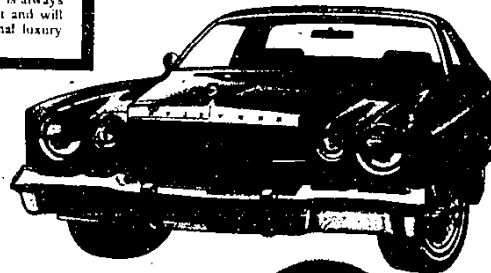
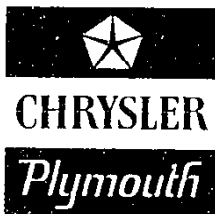
It's not a woodie but Dodge's customized Warlock pickup truck does feature real oak sideboards. The oak gets a finish of clear urethane lacquer for protection while still letting the natural beauty of the wood show. Oak buttons cover screw heads to give the sideboards an all-oak exterior.

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