

AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR : QUESTION #4

Will the NAFTA force changes to vehicle standards in Canada?

Background:

The Motor Vehicle Safety Act (MVSA) and the Motor Vehicle Tire Safety Act (MVTSA) empower the Governor in Council to make regulations regarding new motor vehicles and tires sold in Canada for the purpose of protecting the Canadian public against death, personal injury or impairment of health.

The regulations are, for the most part, technical standards to which all vehicles must comply. The remainder of the regulations are administrative in nature to ensure uniform labelling and identification of vehicles. The regulations on tires are similar in spirit to the MVSA, requiring certification by the manufacturer or the importer complies with the federal standards in force on the date of manufacture.

The regulations govern the following areas of vehicle design: 1) lighting and signalling, 2) braking, 3) occupant protection, 4) fuel system integrity, 4) exhaust and other evaporative emissions control. Tires are also subject to similar safety requirements specifying durability and strength.

The vehicle and tire safety standards are very similar to those of the United States, however, there exist minor differences, such as the requiring of day-time running lights, bumper standards, and locations specifications on automatic seat belts.

The government inspects the compliance of the regulations of vehicle and tires through a spot check procedure on vehicles at the retail level. Non-compliance requires the faults to be corrected.

RESPONSE:

- THE REGULATIONS REGARDING THE STANDARDS OF VEHICLES IN TERMS OF SAFETY FROM DEATH OR PERSONAL INJURY ARE SET OUT BY THE MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY ACT AND THE MOTOR VEHICLE TIRE SAFETY ACT. THE NAFTA NEGOTIATIONS WILL EXAMINE BARRIERS TO TRADE IN THE RESPECTIVE, HOWEVER CANADA RETAINS THE RIGHT TO DECIDE UPON THE QUALITY AND SAFETY OF THE VEHICLES WHICH ARE PERMITTED FOR SALE IN CANADA. NON-COMPLIANCE TO THE ABOVE MENTIONED ACTS NECESSITATES ACTION TO CORRECT OFFENDING DISCREPANCIES.
- A NAFTA WILL IN NO WAY DIMINISH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT LEGISLATION WHICH SETS HIGH STANDARDS DESIGNED REGARDING VEHICLE EXHAUST AND OTHER EMISSIONS TO PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF CANADA'S ENVIRONMENT.