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TALKRADIO 570 KLIF-AM ED WALLACE

Talkradio 570 KLIF-AM Ed Wallace. (PRNewsFoto)[JL]
DALLAS, TX USA 06/11/2001

DALLAS, July 5 The automotive industry analyst who won the 2001 Gerald R. Loeb Award for excellence in business journalism reports finding what he calls a significant problem with the Ford and Firestone database provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. He says it's not always a Firestone product quality failure but a simple programming error that often produces a record of a Firestone failure -- in the database that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has used to track tread separation by tire. NHTSA's view differs.

Longtime industry observer Ed Wallace, host of the weekly radio show "Wheels With Ed Wallace," reported to his listeners last Saturday that he discovered an embedded Sort command error in the database on Thursday of last week. Wallace often uses his own software programs to validate the reams of data he uses in the show, his weekly "Wallace Report" newsletter and columns he writes for national publications.

Wallace broke the story June 30, 2001 on his 570 KLIF program, reporting that he had found a significant problem with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's database of Firestone problems on Ford Explorers. Among Wallace's findings: A flawed "Sort Command" would assign one incident of alleged tire separation to two completely different vehicles -- one of which would only be a computer generated accident. It often then transposed data such as tire brand and type, mileage of vehicle and or tires, and what manufacturing location had originally made the tires. Reading his correspondence with NHTSA aloud, including its thanks for his "independent verification of the error," Wallace told his audience that this error could have induced reports of many Firestone tire failures on Ford products in the media, failures that never actually happened.

In responding to media inquiries, however, NHTSA has stated that the problem has been corrected -- and that it only existed for 10 days. Wallace doubts that statement as to the amount of time the database was incorrect. Additionally, the agency's website credits Safety Forum, not Wallace, with discovering the error.

In its two evening newscasts this past Friday, KDFW-FOX Four in Dallas reported independently verifying this problem based on Wallace's research and broadcast. Dallas' WFAA-ABC Channel Eight did similar investigative reporting of the issue on Monday of this week.

Wallace is making all his findings and data public. His correspondence with NHTSA, the agency's replies verifying the problem, how he found this error, what it could mean to you, and the entire original NHTSA database are available for download and independent verification at <http://www.INSIDEAUTOMOTIVE.COM>.

About Ed Wallace

A longtime auto industry analyst and journalist, Wallace has contributed articles to "Car and Driver," "AMI Auto World Weekly," "American Way," and "RPM," a national dealer's publication. His numerous broadcasting awards include the 2001 Gerald R. Loeb Award for excellence in business journalism. Dallas station 570 KLIF AM broadcasts "Wheels With Ed Wallace" Saturday mornings from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.