

Mr. Drew Larson
5414 Martin Road
Erie, PA 16509

Dear Mr. Larson:

This is in response to your e-mail expressing concerns about your motorcycle helmet with a plastic visor and mouth guard. In your e-mail, you state that, while you were riding a four-wheeled all terrain vehicle, you fell off the vehicle, and the helmet's visor broke. You claim that the helmet was "DOT approved" but "did not hold up to many of the standards."

Your letter describes some of the injuries you suffered as a result of your fall. I hope that you have recovered from those injuries and that you suffered no permanent injuries.

By way of background information, Federal law (49 U.S.C. Chapter 301, Motor Vehicle Safety) authorizes the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to issue Federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSSs) for new motor vehicles and new items of motor vehicle equipment. NHTSA also investigates safety-related defects. Neither NHTSA nor the Department of Transportation approves motor vehicles or motor vehicle equipment. Instead, the law establishes a "self-certification" process under which each manufacturer is responsible for certifying that its products meet all applicable safety standards.

Motorcycle helmets are subject to FMVSS No. 218 (49 CFR §571.218), which specifies performance requirements for helmets to ensure that helmets reduce the likelihood of head injuries in crashes. The DOT symbol on the helmet is a certification by the helmet manufacturer, not the DOT, that the helmet conforms to FMVSS No. 218. The standard does not specify performance requirements for motorcycle helmet visors. There currently is no FMVSS that applies to the visor.

NHTSA investigates safety-related defects in motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment. For information about our defect programs or to file a complaint report, you can log into <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/> or call the DOT Auto Safety Hotline at 1-888-DASH-2-DOT (1-888-327-4236). A NHTSA representative will record your report.

Thank you for bringing this to our attention. I hope you find this information helpful.

Sincerely,

John Womack
Acting Chief Counsel

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