

NHTSA's Consumer Complaint Database

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Presented By:

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(NHTSA)
Office Of Defects Investigation (ODI)**



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Presentation Objective

- Overview of NHTSA's Complaint Database
- Uses / Importance
- Traffic
- Introduce the “Portable” Complaint



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“VOQ”: Vehicle Owners Questionnaire

What

When / How

Who

safecar.gov Safety Complaint Portable Form
Step 1: Complete this form.
Step 2: Click [here](#) to save the form to your computer.
Step 3: Click [here](#) to access the upload web page.

Temporary Complaint Number (TCN): ABN17-4305 This PDF document is secured and the content is protected

Required Information in Bold Form Approved: O.M.B. No. 2127-0000

Vehicle Information

Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) (See instructions on the next page to locate the VIN.)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

Select/Enter Make Enter Model Select/Enter Year

Incident Information

Approximate Incident Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
For multiple incident dates enter the first date of occurrence.

Was there a Crash? Yes No
Was there a Fire? Yes No

Failure Mileage miles For multiple incidents enter the first failure mileage.
Speed (at time of incident) mph

Number of Persons Injured, if any
Number of Deaths, if any

Description (up to 1000 characters)
WARNING: This description, exactly as you enter it, may appear in a public NHTSA database. Do not include any personal information (name, street/email address, phone number, social security/driver license number, Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), etc...).

If your component is not listed below, please describe the component in the above description field.

Failed Component 1 Failed Component 2 Failed Component 3
Select the Component Select the Component Select the Component

Personal Information

First Name
Last Name
Email (provided easier and locked for your security)
Daytime Phone Evening Phone
Address 1
Address 2
City
State Zip Code

888-327-4238 | www.safercar.gov
Department of Transportation, NHTSA, Office of Defects Investigation/CRD, NV9-216, 1200 New Jersey Ave SE, Washington, DC 20590



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VOQ Background

- Consumers file their own VOQ with NHTSA
- Each is read at least once by an ODI screener
- 2/3 filed within a month of the incident
- Primarily used for defect screening and investigations
 - “Unreasonable safety risk”



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Consumer Complaint Origins (CY05-10)

➤ Internet



- Filed 1st person
- www.safercar.gov
- 70% of total volume

➤ “VOQ”



- Filed 1st person
- OMB Form
- 1% of total volume

➤ Auto Safety Hotline



- Filed w/ operator
- 1.888.327.4236
- 25% of total volume

➤ Consumer Letters



- Filed 1st person
- Mapped into VOQ database
- 4% of total volume



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Where Do Complaints Go?

- **ARTEMIS**
 - ~476k VOQs in database since 2000
 - Relational & image data
 - Search VOQs & office history
 - Receive / store EWR data
 - Underpins Safercar.gov

The screenshot shows the ARTEMIS Complaints Search interface. At the top, there is a 'Complaints Search' header. Below it, a search form is displayed with the following fields and options:

- Description:** A text input field with a 'Keyword Expansion' checkbox and an 'Add Keywords' button.
- Incident Date:** 'From' and 'To' date pickers.
- Date Received:** 'From' and 'To' date pickers.
- ODI Number Range:** 'From' and 'To' text input fields.
- ODI Numbers:** A large text area for entering specific ODI numbers.
- Complaint Type:** A dropdown menu.
- Referral Source:** A dropdown menu.
- Num. Injured:** A dropdown menu and a text input field.
- Num. Deaths:** A dropdown menu and a text input field.
- Status Code:** A dropdown menu.

At the bottom of the form, there are 'Find Complaints' and 'Reset' buttons. Below the form, there is an 'Add' button.

Complaint Data

- **ODI's most important field data**
 - Prompts most new defect investigations
 - Supports existing investigations
 - Assess safety recall effectiveness
- **NHTSA also uses complaints to:**
 - Target compliance testing
 - Support research & rulemaking activity
- **Valuable consumer information tool**



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Caveats for Reviewing Complaints

- **Complaint volume at face value not necessarily an indicator of a safety issue**
- **Where appropriate, follow-up interviews improve understanding of complaints**
- **Most component codes assigned by the public**
- **Component Code \neq Condition**

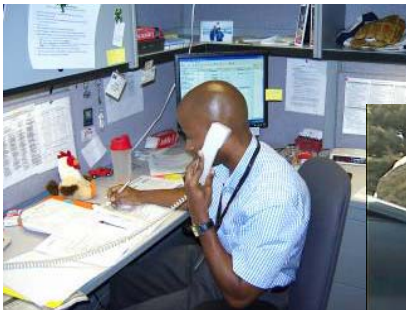


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US Vehicles: 257 Million

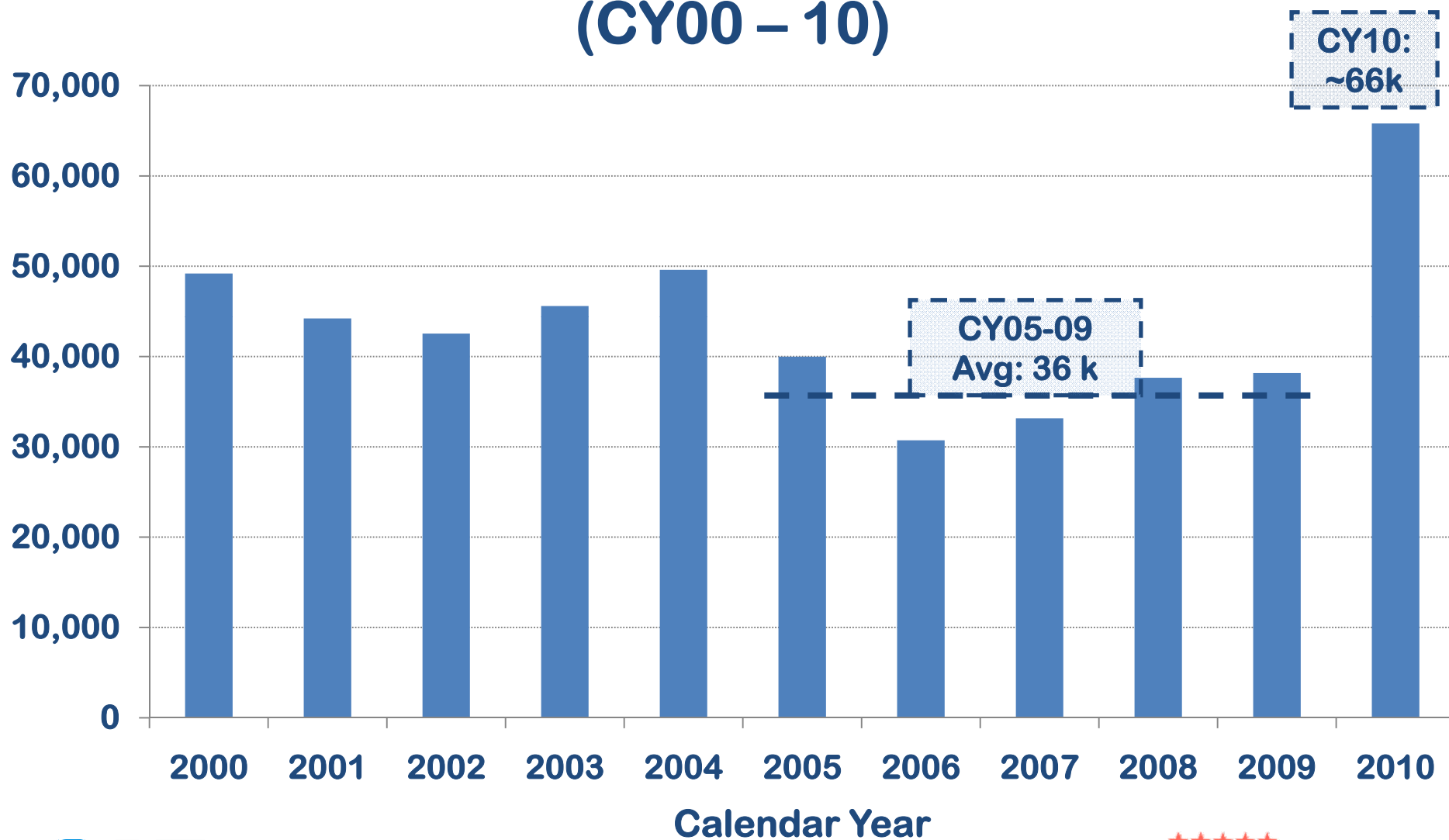
Complaint Traffic



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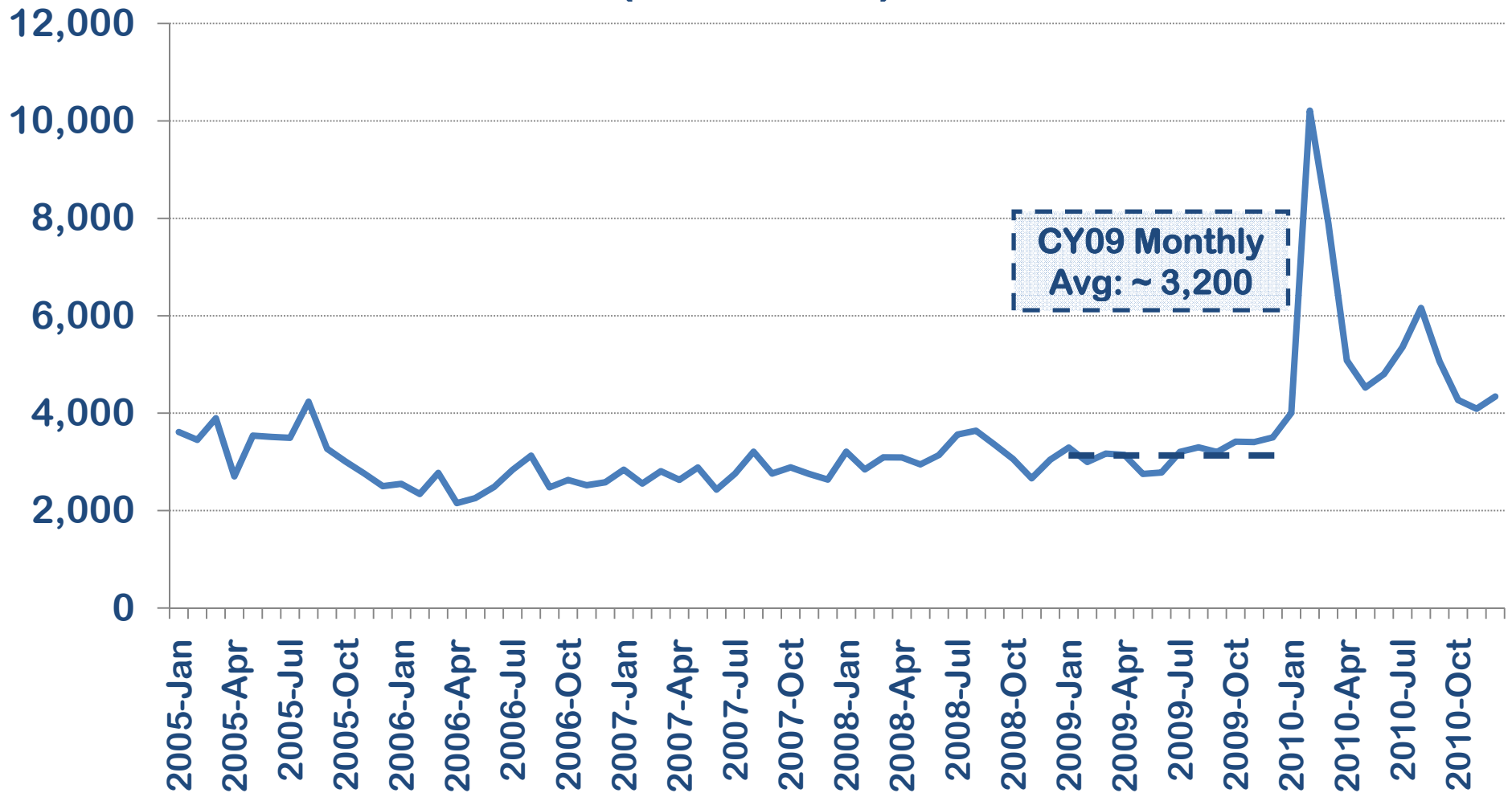
Total Complaints Received Annually (CY00 – 10)



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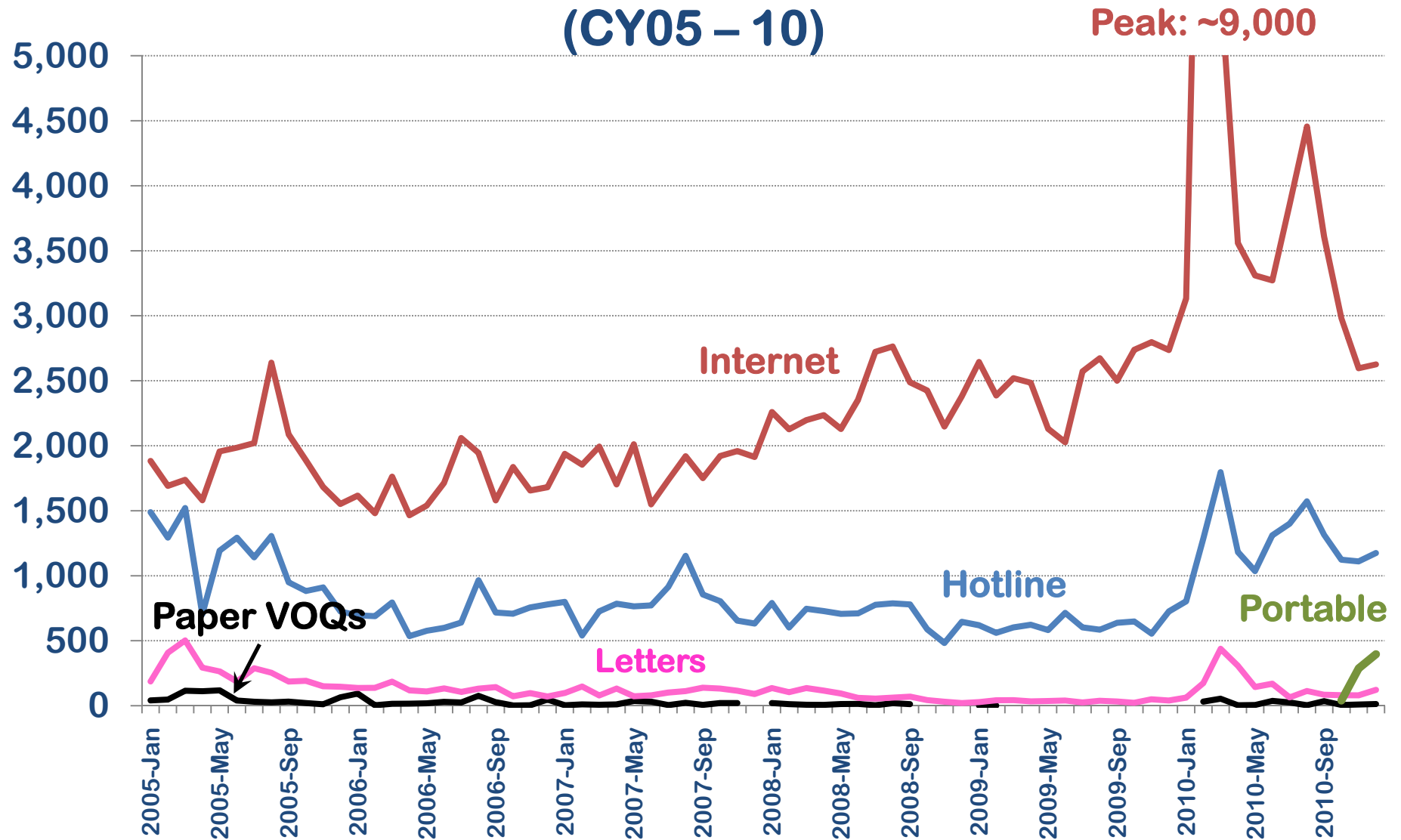
Total Complaints Received Monthly (CY05 – 10)



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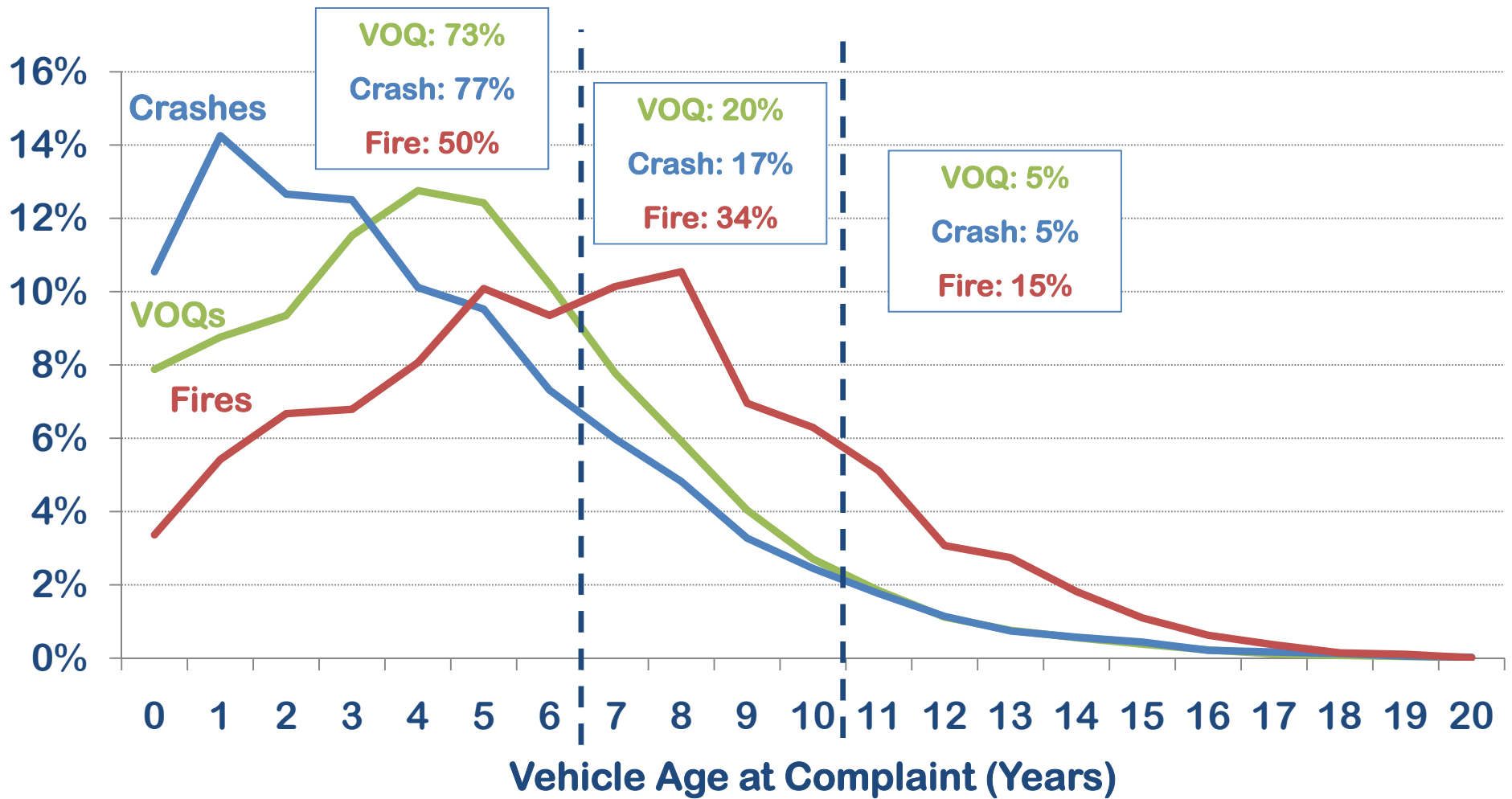
Complaints (by Type) Received Monthly (CY05 – 10)



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Vehicle Age at Complaint (CY05 – 10)



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Portable VOQ “SVOQ” (Background)

- **Pilot project**
 - Vehicle- only
 - Learning will be applied across process
- **Goal: minimize internet “abandonment rate”**
- **Contains fewer data elements**
- **Secure pdf filled out at complainant’s leisure**
- **Numbers rising**
 - >1,000 received to-date
 - ~10% of CY11 traffic YTD



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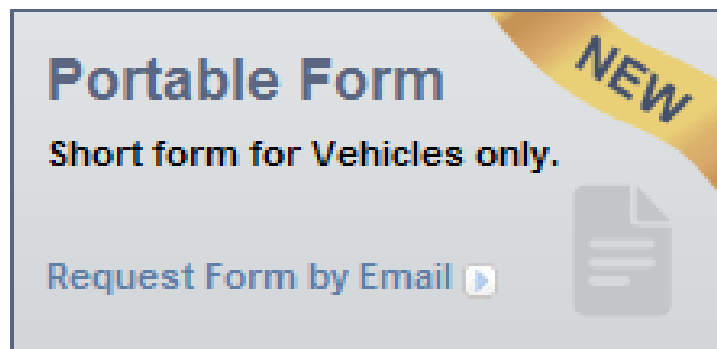
Portable VOQ “SVOQ” (Process)

- Visit us:
<http://www.safercar.gov/>

- Go to complaint section:



- Select Portable Form:



- Fill in contact info
- Confirmation e-mail will be sent w/ link
- After confirmation link visited, form sent
- Follow form instructions:

Safety Complaint Portable Form

Step 1: Complete this form.

Step 2: Click [here](#) to save the form to your computer

Step 3: Click [here](#) to access the upload web page.



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Conclusions

- **Consumer complaints are one of NHTSA's most important source of field data**
- **Complaint volume increased dramatically last year**
- **Maintaining high complaint traffic is a NHTSA priority**
 - **Continued outreach efforts**
 - **Enhancements to the complaint process**



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Questions?

Contact Information

Internet:

<http://www.safercar.gov/>

Auto Safety Hotline

1.888.327.4236



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