

Mr. Richard L. Russell
12475 Central Avenue
Suite 352
Chino, CA 91710

Dear Mr. Russell:

This responds to your FAX of November 15, 1995, to Blane Laubis of this agency, asking for an interpretation of Federal lighting regulations as they may affect your plans to modify your 1956 Jeep.

You wish to add two additional auxiliary lights to supplement your upper beams, and you ask whether these lights are "required to be DOT approved." The answer is no; the DOT regulation on motor vehicle lighting (Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 108 Lamps, Reflective Devices, and Associated Equipment does not prescribe requirements for lamps intended to supplement the headlamps, and thus the lamps of which you speak do not have to be certified as meeting Standard No. 108. As a matter of information, your use of the words "DOT approved" reflects a common misconception. We have no authority to approve or disapprove lighting equipment. Under our statute, a lighting (or vehicle) manufacturer is required to certify that its equipment (or vehicle) meets Standard No. 108 (if it is replacement equipment included in the standard), and the use of the DOT symbol on the item is the most frequently used method of certification. This means that the "DOT approved" headlamps on your 1956 Jeep are probably replacement sealed beams with DOT markings on them.

You ask whether there is any limitation to bulb wattage for auxiliary lamps used to supplement the headlamps when used on the upper beam. There is no wattage limitation; however, if auxiliary lamps were installed by the dealer on a new vehicle before its first sale, we would regard the vehicle manufacturer's certification as negated if the brightness and location of the auxiliary lamps were such as to affect an oncoming driver's ability to perceive the front turn signals.

Although your Jeep was manufactured long before the effective date of Standard No. 108 (January 1, 1969), we ask you to

consider this safety concern when adding auxiliary lamps. We do not know the local laws on this subject, and recommend that you seek advice from the Department of California Highway Patrol.

If you have any further questions, Taylor Vinson of this Office will answer them for you (phone 202-366- 5263).

Sincerely,

Samuel J. Dubbin Chief Counsel

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