

FMVSS #215

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what 1971 auto regulation required crash absorbing from fenders and how was it implemented

The 1971 regulation is **Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 215** (Exterior Protection), which mandated that front bumpers survive 5-mph collisions and rear bumpers 2.5-mph collisions without damage to lighting and fuel systems. By 1974, the rule required both front and rear bumpers to meet the 5-mph standard. 🇺🇸 Chicago Car Club +3



While it is commonly called the "5-mph bumper rule," it was legally designed to protect the **car's body, structure, and safety-related components** (such as lighting, cooling, and fuel systems) from absorbing crash energy. Because **fenders** sit directly behind the front corners of the vehicle, the regulation fundamentally dictated how front body panels and assemblies had to be protected and constructed to prevent them from buckling during a minor impact. 🌐 viaretro.com +1

when was FMVSS 215 finalized

The final rule for FMVSS No. 215 was officially issued and finalized on **April 9, 1971**. 🌐 Department of Transportat...

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) published it on this date to give automotive manufacturers a lead time of roughly 17 months to re-engineer their vehicle front ends, body panels, and fenders before the standard officially took effect on **September 1, 1972**. 🔗

Were the new fenders required by a certain date of manufacture?

Yes, the compliance modifications to protect fenders and body panels were tied to an exact manufacturing cutoff date: **September 1, 1972**.  Department of Transpor... +1

Because the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Administration (NHTSA) regulates vehicles by their literal date of assembly rather than model year, the implementation occurred in strict chronological phases:  National Child Passenge... +1

- **Phase 1 (September 1, 1972):** Any passenger car manufactured on or after this date was legally required to meet the initial [FMVSS No. 215](#) standard. This meant front end assemblies and fenders had to withstand a **5-mph barrier crash** without damage to safety systems, while rear assemblies had to withstand a 2.5-mph crash. This date perfectly aligned with the rollout of the **1973 model year**.  Transport Research Inte... +4
- **Phase 2 (September 1, 1973):** Exactly one year later, the mandate was upgraded for the **1974 model year**. Any car manufactured on or after this date was required to pass a strict **5-mph pendulum test** for both the front and rear of the vehicle, ensuring that bumpers did not override or underide each other, which further isolated the fenders from receiving impact energy.  Transport Research Inte... +1