



U.S. Department
of Transportation
National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

APR 14 2005

[REDACTED]
Lodi, NJ [REDACTED]

NVS-216 jls
Ref. No. 10074211

Dear Mrs. [REDACTED]

Thank you for your report dated June 2, 2004, concerning a problem your son, Salvatore F. Sanfilippo, encountered with a model year (MY) 2002 Acura RSX vehicle. The New Jersey State Office of the Attorney General forwarded your report to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for a response. It was received on October 5, 2004. However, your correspondence was inappropriately coded as not requiring a response. We regret any inconvenience our delay may have caused you.

NHTSA is the Federal agency responsible for improving safety on our Nation's highways. We are authorized to order manufacturers to recall and repair vehicles or items of motor vehicle equipment when our investigations indicate that they contain serious safety defects in their design, construction, or performance. We also monitor the adequacy of manufacturers' recall campaigns. In order for the agency to initiate an investigation, we look carefully at the body of consumer complaints and other available data to determine whether a defect may exist. We cannot act on isolated problems or resolve disputes between individual owners, dealers, or manufacturers.

We appreciate the report you provided. Reports from motorists are a very important source of information for us. Each report is analyzed and entered into a database to help us determine whether an investigation into a possible safety defect is warranted.

A review of our database relative to problems associated with non-deployment of the air bag system in MY 2002 Acura RSX vehicles revealed insufficient evidence to warrant opening a safety defect investigation at this time. The information you provided has been entered into our database. It will be considered with other reports to identify any safety defect trends that may require our attention.

Each manufacturer designs its vehicles so the air bags will deploy if the severity of a crash exceeds a certain threshold. However, there is no Federal requirement establishing a particular threshold. Most manufacturers design their air bags to deploy when the crash severity



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888-DASH-2-DOT
888-327-4236

is in the range of an 8 to 14 mph crash into a fixed solid barrier. This severity is about the same as a crash into another vehicle of equivalent weight at 16 to 28 mph. In lower speed crashes, where the air bag does not deploy, occupant protection is provided by the design of the interior surfaces in the vehicle, as well as by the safety belts provided at each seating position.

A number of factors, other than crash severity, can affect whether an air bag will deploy in a given crash; e.g., the angle of impact, the speed of the other vehicle, and the amount of force absorbed by the other vehicle or object that is impacted. Only an expert in crash reconstruction can provide an educated opinion as to whether the air bag in a vehicle should have deployed in a specific crash.

Should you encounter a safety-related problem with a motor vehicle or item of motor vehicle equipment in the future, you can contact our toll-free DOT Auto Safety Hotline (Hotline) at 1-888-327-4236. One of our representatives may be able to assist you on matters concerning motor vehicle and motor vehicle equipment safety recalls or to report an alleged safety problem. You can also request safety information. If our telephones are busy, or you call during non-working hours, you can leave your name, telephone number, and a brief subject on our recording system. A DOT Hotline representative will return your call.

Additionally, we have an Internet Web site at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov> that you may want to visit. An electronic Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ) is also available on this Web site at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/ivoq>. This form is for vehicle owners to report safety related problems about their motor vehicles or motor vehicle equipment, e.g., child safety seats, jacks, tires, brake fluid, etc. The reports submitted are transferred to our database and are used to identify safety-related defect trends that require our attention. If you do not have access to the Internet, please use the enclosed VOQ to inform this agency of any future motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment safety problems you may experience. Also, a summary listing of vehicle owners' complaints, safety recalls, manufacturers' service bulletins, etc., can be obtained at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems>.

If further assistance is needed, please contact Mr. Michael J. Jordan, Safety Defects Program Assistant, Correspondence Research Division, Office of Defects Investigation, at (202) 493-0576.

Sincerely,



Alberto A. Jimenez, Chief
Correspondence Research Division
Office of Defects Investigation
Enforcement

Enclosure