



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

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

MAR 03 2005
MAR 03 2005

NVS-216 jcc
Ref. #10095399

Bethesda, MD

Dear

Thank you for your correspondence dated September 9, 2004, concerning an article you read about 2004 Honda CR-V sport utility vehicles (SUV). Your correspondence was received on September 28, 2004. Due to limited resources we were not able to respond to you in a more timely manner. We regret any inconvenience our delay may have caused you.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (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 greatly 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 determine whether an investigation into a possible safety defect is warranted.

On February 19, 2004, NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) opened a safety defect investigation (PE04-018) into reports alleging oil filter gasket leakage following oil changes that resulted, in some cases, in engine compartment fires in 2003 Honda CR-Vs. Subsequent to receiving notification that American Honda Motor Company, Inc. (Honda), would issue communications through its dealer network concerning the necessity to follow correct procedures when replacing oil filters in the subject vehicles, ODI closed PE04-018 on July 1, 2004, without the determination that a safety-related defect exists in the subject vehicles. For your information, we have enclosed the opening and closing resumes for PE04-018.



NHTSA
People Saving People
www.nhtsa.gov

DOT AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE
888-DASH-2-DOT
888-327-4236

Following the closure of PE04-018, ODI continued to receive reports alleging electrical and engine compartment fires in 2003 and 2004 Honda CR-Vs. Therefore, on September 9, 2004, ODI opened an engineering analysis (EA04-027) to further investigate this issue. An engineering analysis is a more detailed and complete technical analysis of the character and scope of an alleged defect. For your information, we have enclosed the opening resume for EA04-027.

In December 2004, Honda informed NHTSA that it would notify all owners of 2003, 2004, and 2005 CR-Vs of the potential risk of fire as the result of an improper oil change at the first oil filter service. An improper oil change is, among other things, when the service technician fails to check for and remove the original oil filter gasket from the engine block. The original oil filter gaskets were installed in the subject vehicles prior to overseas transport to the American market and can experience a condition where they are more likely to stick to the engine block when the original oil filter is removed. This condition, which does not exist in the replacement oil filters, can prevent a sufficient seal from being obtained between the replacement oil filter and the engine block, increasing the potential for oil leakage and the occurrence of an engine compartment fire. The risk of fire is insignificant when an oil filter service is properly performed. Honda's letter to vehicle owners will include instructions to follow depending on whether their vehicle has had the first oil change performed. If the vehicle has recently had the first oil change, Honda will provide a free inspection of the vehicle to assure that the oil filter is properly installed. Honda will also replace the oil filters in all unsold stock of affected vehicles. Honda has recently implemented a design change to eliminate this concern in future production vehicles.

On January 19, 2005, subsequent to receiving notification from Honda that it intended to send a notification letter to registered operators of the subject vehicles advising them of the "double gasket" condition and the risk of fire, ODI closed EA04-027. For your information, we have enclosed the closing resume and report for EA04-027.

You can contact our toll-free DOT Auto Safety Hotline (Hotline) at 1-888-DASH-2-DOT (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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "A. Jimenez", with a horizontal line extending to the right. Below the signature, the word "for" is written in a smaller, simpler font.

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

Enclosures