

Feb. 14, 2006

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NHTSA
U.S. Department of Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20590

To Whom It May Concern

I am the owner of a 2004 GMC Envoy XUV produced by General Motors. This vehicle was purchased new in September of 2004 and currently has 7400 miles on the odometer. Since this vehicle was picked up from the dealer we have had trouble using the driver side shoulder belt. On certain occasions the belt will not release from the retractor therefore making it impossible to use. When this occurs, we have struggled with the belt to get it to release and most of the time this has proved to be very difficult to achieve. The final time this situation happened, my wife was at the store, was unable to get the belt to release and was forced to drive home without using the seat belt. I also attempted to get the belt to release when she arrived home but was unsuccessful although I tried for approximately 20 minutes. I was finally able to get the belt to release the next morning, (Feb. 8, 2006), and took the vehicle to the local GMC dealer, (Cardenas Motor Inc., 1500 N. Expressway, Brownsville, Texas, 78521). After having the car all day, the response from the dealer was the condition was not covered under warranty and "There was no problem!". At the same time, they produced a document from GM describing this problem affecting 8 different GM models for model years 2004 through 2006. At my request they gave me a copy of this document, (attached). I also reviewed this problem with GMC Consumer Relations and received the same response.

As you can see from the document, the solution from GM is for the consumer to remove the seat belt in a specific manner and when the retractor problem occurs the consumer must try to free it. Although the document states, "the retractor can easily be restored to normal operation", by my own experience this is any thing but easy.

In my opinion this is a design flaw in the retractor system and GM needs to correct the situation before a customer is injured while forced to drive their vehicle without the seat belt because it will not release as it should.

Hopefully the NHTSA will investigate this situation and see that General Motors adequately resolves the problem so the consumer will not have the potential for a disaster while driving one of the affected vehicles.

Thank you for your attention,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

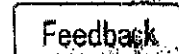
Brownsville, Texas [REDACTED]

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Edison
2/6/06



Document ID# 1738255
2004 GMC Truck Envoy - 2WD



Information on Avoiding Front Seat Belt Retractor Jamming When Storing Seat Belt #03-09-40-006B - (Dec 2, 2005)

Information on Avoiding Front Seat Belt Retractor Jamming When Storing Seat Belt

2004-2006 Buick Rainier

2002-2006 Chevrolet TrailBlazer, TrailBlazer EXT

2002-2006 GMC Envoy, Envoy XL

2004-2005 GMC Envoy XUV

2002-2004 Oldsmobile Bravada

2005-2006 Saab 9-7X

This bulletin is being revised to add the 2006 model year and Saab 9-7X models. Please discard Corporate Bulletin Number 03-09-40-006A (Section 09 - Restraints).

This bulletin is being issued to provide information to the customers if they comment that the left or right front seat belt may appear to not release from the retractor when trying to put on the seat belt.

A Description For Your Customer

This condition generally does not require replacement of any parts. This condition is the result of allowing the belt to enter the retractor at a high rate of speed. If the belt is allowed to go all the way back into the retractor very quickly, it is possible that the force of the belt stopping suddenly against the seat back will vibrate the retractor. This vibration "fools" the retractor into thinking that the vehicle is changing velocity. The normal function of the retractor under this condition is to lock the belt.

How to Correct or Eliminate the Condition

The only way to completely eliminate the condition is not to allow the belt to retract back all the way into the retractor quickly. The fast retraction usually occurs when the customer holds the latch while unbuckling and guides the webbing into the retractor quickly until it's fully stowed. As long as the customer guides the belt at a slower rate of speed, the retractor will work consistently without locking. Also, if the customer unbuckles the belt and lets the webbing retract on its own (without guiding it), there is generally enough friction from the belt against clothing to slow down the belt so it won't lock when it fully stows.

If the customer does allow the belt and latch plate to retract quickly, the retractor can easily be restored to normal operation. Simply pull on the belt to create some slack in the webbing and pay back some of the webbing into the retractor. Slack can also be created by pushing on the foam at the top of the seat back. After a maximum of 10 mm (0.39 in) of webbing is introduced into the retractor, it will unlock and function again. Please demonstrate this action to your customer. After an explanation and demonstration, most customers should be able to unlock the retractor without a problem. You may give a copy of this bulletin to your customer for further reference.

GM bulletins are intended for use by professional technicians, NOT a "do-it-yourselfer". They are written to inform these technicians of conditions that may occur on some vehicles, or to provide information that could assist in the proper service of a vehicle. Properly trained technicians have the equipment, tools, safety instructions, and know-how to do a job properly and safely. If a condition is described, DO NOT assume that the bulletin applies to your vehicle, or that your vehicle will have that condition. See your GM dealer for information on whether your vehicle may benefit from the information.



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