

CL-10183760-1986

February 22, 2007

2007 FEB 27 PM 9:40

Wheaton, IL

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Automobile Safety Director
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Potential steering wheel assembly failure on compact Acura Motor vehicles

Dear Automobile Safety Director:

The steering wheel hub assembly on our 1987 Acura Integra LX 5 Door failed in a manner that could have resulted in total loss of steering control had this owner not become concerned about unusual steering "play". Our 1987 Acura Integra (Mfg. By American Honda VIN JH4DA1759HS) has been maintained according to Acura's suggested maintenance schedule since purchase in April 1987. The vehicle presently has 74,700 miles.

Upon quick removal of the steering wheel center cover, a circular crack was discovered that encompassed approximately 95% of the circumference surrounding the steering wheel retaining nut. Only a thin piece of stamped metal approximately three eighths of an inch wide remained to control the vehicle. Sudden steering wheel movement could have broken this remaining piece of stamped metal. The vehicle was parked for several days to wait for the local Acura dealer to obtain a replacement steering wheel assembly. The repair was made at an approximate cost of \$425.00 for parts and labor.

I could not learn from the local Acura parts department any details about the frequency of Acura steering wheel assembly failures. But my close visual inspection of the steering wheel metal leads me to believe that a routine safety inspection should be made to determine if the Acura steering wheel assembly indicates metal fatigue in the form of cracks around the steering hub retaining nut. I could not find any reference to a visual inspection of the steering wheel hub nut inspection and its surrounding stamped metal in any of the Acura owner's documents that were delivered with the vehicle in 1987. I did, however, learn that a similar steering wheel design exists in the 1987 and 1988 Honda Civic compact cars. However, I have not had the time to research any details about failed steering assemblies on the Honda Civic.

My life experience indicates that regular inspections and maintenance are necessary to insure the safe mechanical performance of an automobile. I was a bit perplexed when I offered the failed steering wheel assembly to American Honda for analysis without interest in this safety matter. I have saved the failed steering wheel assembly and will offer it to your traffic safety administration if you have an interest in receiving the assembly. Please advise of your interest within the next sixty (60) days or the Acura Integra steering wheel assembly will be sent to the great landfill in our area.

Sincerely,

Phone: Home Business Email:

DD
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CC