



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

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

August 22, 2008

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Bellingham, WA [REDACTED]

NVS-216 et
Ref. No. 10237131

Dear [REDACTED]:

Thank you for your correspondence dated July 19, 2008, concerning your model year (MY) 2005 Honda Civic. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Office of Defects Investigation received your correspondence on July 30, 2008.

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 this report and the previous report you provided through our safety hotline. Reports from motorists are a very important source of information for us. In your correspondence you indicated that your air bags did not deploy after impact with a parked vehicle. We have reviewed our database in an effort to identify whether a safety defect trend exists with regard to air bag non-deployment problems in MY 2005 Honda Civic vehicles. At this time, there is insufficient evidence to support a safety defect trend. The information you provided has been entered into our database. It will be considered with future 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 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.

With regards to your request to have Honda pay for your medical bills, please be advised that this does not fall under our jurisdiction. If you have not done so, you may consider contacting your local Consumer Protection Agency, Better Business Bureau, or the Washington Office of the Attorney General regarding your request.

Should you encounter a safety-related problem with a motor vehicle or item of motor vehicle equipment in the future, you can complete an electronic Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire online at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/ivoq>. 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>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank S. Borris II". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "F" and "B".

Frank S. Borris II, Acting Chief
Correspondence Research Division
Office of Defects Investigation
Enforcement