



U.S. Department
of Transportation

2008-08-22 11:45
National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

DOT Auto Safety Hotline

Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire

To Report Vehicle Safety Defects

1-888-DASH-2-DOT

(1-888-327-4236)

INTERNET: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 100148

Date Received

27-AUG-2008

Repository ☐

Reference No.
10239921

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name

Address

City

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE

State

CA

Zip Code

Daytime Telephone Number

E-mail Address

Evening Telephone Number

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of this report to the manufacturer of your vehicle?
In the absence of an authorized signature, your name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.

☒ YES

☒ NO

Signature of Owner

Date 09/05/08

VEHICLE INFORMATION

17 digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side

5B4MP67G86

Make

FLEETWOOD

Model

TERRA LX 31M

Model Year

2007

Date Purchased

11-10-06

Dealer's Name and Telephone Number

MICHAEL HOHL RV. 775 885 1777

Engine:

No: Cylinders

Fuel Type:

GAS

Original Owner

☐

Dealer's City

State

Zip Code

Transmission Type

☐ Antilock Brakes

Powertrain

☐ Cruise Control

Vehicle Component Code

170000 LATCHES/LOCKS/LINKAGES

Multiple Failure:

AUTD

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s)

29-JUL-2008

Failure Mileage

6027

Failure Speed

0

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Make

Tire Model (Name or Number)

Tire Size (Example P215/65R15)

DOT No. (Example: DOTM19ABC036)

☐ Original Equipment
☐ Prior Repair

Failure Location:

Tire Component Code

Tire Failure Type:

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A CHILD SEAT FAILURE

Make:

Date Manufactured:

Model No./Name:

Seat Type:

Installation System:

Child Seat Component Code:

Failed Part:

APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION

(Please describe in detail the incident(s), failure(s), crash(es), and injury(ies).)

Crash

☐ Yes

☒ No

Fire

☐ Yes

☒ No

Number of Persons Injured

0

Number of Deaths

0

Reported to Police

N

Narrative Description of Incident(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies).

Please describe (1) events leading up to the failure, (2) failure and its consequences, and (3) what was done to correct the failure; i.e., parts repaired or replaced (and if old part is available).

TL*THE CONTACT OWNS A 2007 FLEETWOOD TERRY LX31M. WHEN THE CONTACT ATTEMPTED TO CLOSE THE STORAGE DOOR ON THE DRIVER'S SIDE, THE LATCH WOULD NOT CONNECT. SHE COULD NOT CLOSE THE DOOR. THE CONTACT ALSO NOTICED THAT THE DOORS DID NOT FIT PROPERLY ON THE VEHICLE. THE VEHICLE WAS TAKEN TO THE DEALER AND THEY STATED THAT THE DOORS NEEDED TO BE ADJUSTED. SHE DID NOT NOTICE ANY DIFFERENCES BEFOREHAND. THE CURRENT AND FAILURE MILEAGES WERE 6,027.

Service MANAGER Rudy Robles STATED THAT HE HAS SEEN APPROX 13 SUCH FAILURES IN THE PAST 3 YRS. PARTS/Service Counter person related that he has sold upwards of 1,000 replacement LATCHES. FAILURE IS COMMON!

Include, if available: Police/Fire Department Report, Photos, and Repair Invoice.

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

The Privacy Act of 1974-Public Law 93-579 This information is requested pursuant to authority vested in the National Highway Traffic Safety Act and subsequent amendments. You are under no obligation to respond to this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist the NHTSA in determining whether a Manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If the NHTSA proceeds with administrative enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.

Narrative Description of Incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies)

I FIRST NOTICED THIS PROBLEM ON 7-29-08 WHEN PREPARING FOR A TRIP. A STORAGE COMPARTMENT DOOR ON THE LEFT SIDE OF MY COACH WOULD NOT CLOSE. I CHECKED TO SEE THAT NOTHING WAS BLOCKING THE DOOR AND TRIED THE DOOR HANDLE NOTING THAT THE DOOR LATCHES WERE OPERATING SMOOTHLY AND AS DESIGNED. I TRIED CLOSING THE DOOR WHILE PULLING THE DOOR HANDLE BUT THE LATCHES WOULD NOT CATCH UNDER THE DOOR FRAME MOUNTED LATCHES. I THEN PUSHED IT WITH SOME WEIGHT BEHIND IT, AND FINALLY RESORTED TO SLAMMING THE DOOR WITH THE LATCHES FINALLY CATCHING THE LATCHES TO SECURE THE DOOR ON THE SECOND ATTEMPT. 3 DAYS LATER ON THE TRIP A STORAGE DOOR ON THE RIGHT SIDE WAS PROBLEM SHUT. I WAS ONLY ABLE TO OPEN IT AFTER THE RIGHT SIDE LATCH BROKE OFF. A SECOND DOOR ON THE RIGHT SIDE ALSO BEGAN TO SHOW SIMILAR PROBLEMS. I'VE ENCLOSED PICTURES, A COPY OF THE LETTER I SENT TO FLEETWOOD AND THE WORK INVOICE.

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

U.S. Department
of Transportation

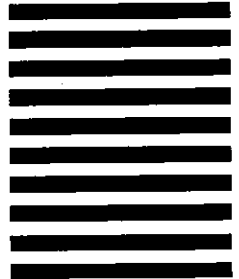
National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE.
Washington, D.C. 20077-9382

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use \$300



NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

FIRST-CLASS MAIL

PERMIT NO. 1888

WASHINGTON, DC

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

US Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Office of Defects Investigation, NVS-210
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE.
Washington, D.C. 20077-9382



Think your vehicle
has a safety defect?



If so:

Use the enclosed
form to file a report.

or visit:

www.safercar.gov

or call:

Vehicle Safety Hotline
888-327-4236



Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ)
U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Fleetwood Motorhomes, Owner Relations
1010 Commerce Dr.
Decatur, Indiana 46733
Attention: Owner Relations

August 29, 2008

Fleetwood Mfg. and representatives,

I am writing to advise you of safety concerns that have come to my attention regarding my 2007 Fleetwood Terra LX 31M. I purchased my coach new on 11-06-2006 from Michael Hohl RV in Carson City NV. As a first time RV owner knowing little about the major purchase I just made, I also purchased an extended warranty to insure coverage for 7 years. In the just under two years I have owned my coach, I have put just under 6,000 miles on it. A significant portion of those miles have been back and forth to the dealership to address several warranty issues, which have been addressed, although not always in a timely and conscientious manner. I have taken the coach out on actual trips approximately 6 times.

My first issue came to light in early June when I was parking my coach in storage. This involves backing my coach through a gate roughly 8 to 10 inches wider than the coach. I first placed the coach in drive and pulled forward and left to achieve the proper angle of entry into the gate opening and then put the coach into reverse and began my backing maneuver. I then heard a noise and came to a stop and looked down the right side of my coach using the right side mirror. What I saw was that at sometime, the automatic steps had extended and had contacted the gate post as I was backing through it. I did not continue to back but instead pulled forward and out of contact with the gate post. When I opened the door to inspect the damage the step remained extended and I could see that the side bars had been bent. I then closed the door and the steps retracted although due to being bent did bind up and stop with a good portion of the steps still exposed. I re-entered the coach, listening for the sound of the step motor to signal the retracting of the steps and proceeded to complete my parking process backing into my storage yard.

Upon my return home, I contacted my dealership to report what had happened. The first thing I was asked by the service representative was whether or not I had closed the door prior to backing my coach. I had already carefully reviewed my actions prior to this incident, and I can say that without doubt, I had closed the door of the coach. You see, as I stated before, I am a first time RV owner. I have not logged enough roadtime to be totally at ease with the operation of the coach and have developed a practice of running through mental check lists when performing even the most simple tasks with regards to my Coach so that I do have a distinct recollection of having closed the door. Beyond that, I have read the literature from Kwikkee, the company that manufactures the step system and have gained some knowledge into the proper operation of the system. I understand that there is an ignition override application in the step that is supposed to prevent the step from extending when the ignition is on. Although I remain certain that I did close the door, I believe that it is an undeniable safety concern when the step will extend when the vehicle is in a driving gear, whether or not the door is open.

I have contacted Kwikkee to explain the situation and am trying to coordinate with my dealership to address this issue through my still active warranty with Kwikkee, but feel that there needs to be some dialogue between you two companies to insure that a system can be adopted to insure that this does not happen again.

My second issue came to light on or about July 28th. I was preparing my coach for a trip when I had trouble closing the access door to the water/electricity locker located on the left rear side of the 31M. The door hasps failed to catch onto the door frame latch bars. I manipulated the door handle mechanisms and noted that the hasps were free moving, but when I went to close the door, the hasps failed to slide under and "catch" the latch bars. I tried holding the door handle mechanism open while I shut the door but the hasps still failed to catch. I tried applying some body weight against the door to "push" it shut to no avail. I then proceeded to "slam" the door down and on the second attempt the hasp caught the latches on both sides of the door.

I went on my trip and upon my arrival and having completed hooking up to the water and electricity, the door again required a "slam" before it would close securely. Two days later, when trying to access my propane locker, located just behind the entry door on the right side of the 31M, the door handle mechanism was frozen. This handle, which is not equipped with a lock, could not be opened with numerous attempts. I then slid in a screw driver to attempt to push the hasp into its housing and release from the latch to no avail. With very abrupt and heavy pull, the door finally opened at which time I noted that the right side hasp had sheared off. The right side of the coach door could no longer be secured. During the trip, the right side door accessing the low point drain valves also showed similar signs of failure.

Upon my return home, I contacted my dealership to report what had happened and to arrange to have these issues as well as some other warranty issues addressed. I brought my coach to Michael Hohl RV at the appointed time on 08-25-2008. I made a walk around inspection to point out my concerns to the Service Representative Margo Smith. Although the problems with the doors were verbally articulated, both [REDACTED] and I noted that the door accessing the water/electric locker was only half secured as the left side hasp had failed to "catch" on its corresponding latch. [REDACTED] did mention that she did not believe that my extended warranty would cover the repair of the cargo doors, but she did agree with me that the problem posed an undeniable safety concern. Ms. Smith advised that she would take pictures and contact Fleetwood. On 08-26-2008, [REDACTED] called me and advised that she had contacted Fleetwood and that your representative stated that the issue was one that was attributed to a "trim" and/or "adjustment" issue and therefore would not be covered. I called Fleetwood myself later that morning and spoke to Cindy Wilhelm. I explained the situation pointing out that if the latches failed to secure the doors that a good bump or gust of wind could cause the doors to open while in transit and there could be no arguing what a safety concern that would represent. I also explained that looking at the mechanism it self, that it did not really allow for any "adjustments" to remedy the problem and that essentially, the only remedy would be to replace the hasps. I explained that I believe the problem lies in the material used in the making of the hasps. They are made of a hard plastic which is obviously not up to the task of even minimal use and exposure. At 21 months and less than 6000 miles, I'm sure you would be in agreement that the hasps haven't been overworked. I expressed the opinion that the potential safety hazard should move Fleetwood to consider a safety recall for the hasps. Ms Helm explained that a large number of similar complaints could precipitate the issuance of a recall. The nature of the problem is such that I know that I am not the only one experiencing these failures. But, even if by some miracle, I was the only one, MY safety is in jeopardy and I would hope that Fleetwood has some concern for that fact. Ms Wilhelm was very professional and polite, but unable or unwilling to advance my concerns, so I asked to speak to a supervisor. One was not available at the

time and I left my contact information and am awaiting a follow-up call at this time.

My next calls were to NHTSA and to Consumer Reports to report my concerns to them in hopes there will be public dissemination of this potential problem.

I consider RVing to be a permanent fixture in my future lifestyle. I love my coach and have done some extensive upgrading to enhance my enjoyment. I find it very functional and it meets all of my personal needs. My only reservations have been in post purchase customer service and I do believe that it is an issue that is shared by Fleetwood and my purchasing dealership, Michael Hohl. Although I have been treated with overall very polite and professional representatives from both concerns, it seems that the overriding concern is one of money and "who's going to pay for this". I would have hoped that the concerns of both entities would have been customer safety first and foremost.

In closing, it is my hope that this letter will move you to take some action with both of these issues. Again, my concerns are primarily for the potential safety hazard that both theses issues so obviously represent. Beyond that, I am surprised and disappointed at Fleetwoods apparent unwillingness to even consider steps to mitigate the potential risks sighting that only if a large number of customers complain is it considered to be an issue worth addressing. As a postscript to this practice, I feel compelled to advise you that in speaking to the service manager at Michael Hohl RV, Rudy Robles, he related to me that the issue of the hasps on the storage doors breaking and failing is not uncommon and that he has known of at least a dozen such repair scenarios in the past three years. Is a dozen customers in Carson City Nevada a large enough number to gain your concern? I would hope that you would agree that if even one of your customers safety is at risk, the issue must be addressed immediately. I would very much appreciate it if you could contact me upon receipt of this letter. I will be sure to retain work orders and service records and the service staff at Michael Hohl have assisted in obtaining photographs of the broken and failing door systems. I am certain that they will be happy to speak with you personally if you have any questions about their findings and remedies. Thank you in advance for your assistance in these matters.

Sincerely yours,

[REDACTED]
South Lake Tahoe, CA [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



RSON ST.
WV 89701

SERVICE DEPARTMENT HOURS
8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Monday - Friday
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Saturday

R/O Open Date	R/O Number
8/25/08	6504108/
R/O Close Date	Status
8/29/08	Pre-Invoice
Mileage In	Mileage Out
6027	
Service Advisor / Tag #	
MARGO SMITH/6088	
Vehicle Identification Number	
5B4MP67G86	
Delivery Date	In-Service Date
11/10/06	11/10/06
Color	License Number
TERRA	

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, CA			Work Phone	Vehicle Identification Number	
			Home Phone	5B4MP67G86	
Year	Make	Model	Body	Color	License Number
2007	TERRA	CA 31M	791M74795602	TERRA	
F7062 FIRST EXTENDED Exp: 85000 or 11/10/13 Ded: 50					

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE AND PARTS	AMOUNT
#1 - Customer Reports: DRIVERSIDE SLIDEOUT DOE'NT COME ALL THE WAY BACK IN, STAYS IUT ABOUT 1 INCH Work performed by MICHAEL HOLST (790) Installed 500790 :ULTRA TORQUE MOTOR W/OUT PIN Qty: 1 Freight: SHIPPING CHARGES REMOVED AND REPLACED SLIDEOUT MOTOR FES PAYING \$559.92 AUTH#080709996.....	Serv Cont Serv Cont Serv Cont
#2 - Customer Reports: LADDER MOUNTS DO NOT SIT FLUSH WITH COACH Work performed by MICHAEL HOLST (790) DRILLED OUT RIVETS AND REINSTALLED NEW RIVETS AND SEALED MOUNTS.	Internal
#3 - Customer Reports: OUTSIDE COMPARTMENTS DO NOT CLOSE ALL THE WAY AND SOME LATCHES HAVE BROKEN Work performed by MICHAEL HOLST (790) Installed 137383 :CATCH END (A) 2@13.59 REMOVED AND REPLACED 2 BROKEN LATCHES AND ADJUSTED STRIKERS, TESTED, OK. Sub Total: Labor: 60.00 Parts: 27.18 Total: 87.18	60.00 27.18
#4 - Customer Reports: FRONT SIDE TRIM ON BACK OF COUCH IS COMING OFF THE WALL, THE HOLES ARE BIG AND SCREWS STRIPPED OUT Work performed by MICHAEL HOLST (790) DRILLED OUT EXISTING HOLES AND USED ANCHORS TO REATTACH TO WALL	Internal

TERMS: STRICTLY CASH UNLESS ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE. "I hereby authorize the repair work hereinafter to be done along with the necessary material and agree that you are not responsible for loss or damage to vehicle or articles left in the vehicle in case of fire, theft, or any other cause beyond your control or for any delays caused by unavailability of parts or delays in parts shipments by the supplier or transporter. I hereby grant you or your employees permission to operate the vehicle herein described on streets, highways, or elsewhere for the purpose of testing and/or inspection. An express mechanic's lien is hereby acknowledged on above vehicle to secure the amount of repairs thereto."

DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTIES. Any warranties on the products sold hereby are those made by the manufacturer. The seller hereby expressly disclaims all warranties either express or implied, including any implied warranty of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose, and the seller neither assumes nor authorizes any other person to assume for it any liability in connection with the sale of said products. Any limitation contained herein does not apply where prohibited by law.

LABOR	
PARTS	
DEDUCTIBLE	
SUBLET	
SHOP SUPPLIES	
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	
SALES TAX OR TAX I.D.	
SPECIAL ORDER DEPOSIT	
DISCOUNTS	
TOTAL DUE	

RETURN ON ELECTRICAL OR SAFETY ITEMS OR SPECIAL ORDERS.