

[REDACTED]
New Providence, NJ, USA [REDACTED]
March 20, 2013

Takanobu Ito ,
Chief Executive Officer of Honda Motor Co Ltd
President of Honda Motor Co Ltd
Honda International Headquarters
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INFORMATION Redacted PURSUANT TO THE FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(B)(6)

MAR 27 2013

RE: Vin # 1 H G C P 3 F 8 3 C A [REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Ito:

My wife and I purchased our 2012 Honda Accord in September of 2012. Immediately upon driving the car we observed a vibration at various speeds. I immediately returned the car to the dealer.

Now, after seven attempts to repair the vibration, Honda has failed to rectify the problem. Although the car is new and under warranty, they have given up and left me stuck with a \$30,000 car that shimmies and shakes at speeds above 65 miles per hour.

I am including a log showing my diligence in working with Honda. I am frustrated that my dealer, Madison Honda, and American Honda are both turning their backs on me after all my patience and in spite of Honda's own warranty. Please read over the enclosed litany of events and advise me as to how I can get some kind of satisfaction from your company. After following the protocol asked of me by my dealer, Madison Honda, and by American Honda Customer Service, I feel I am now at a dead end, and so I have decided to seek your own advice.

I have owned three Hondas and have guided my own daughter to also lease two Honda vehicles. I feel abandoned by a company to which I have been loyal. I await your response and good counsel.

Thank you very much.

Yours truly,
[REDACTED]

Copies:

William Vince, Madison Honda COO
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Madison, NJ USA 07940

Koichi Kondo, CEO American Honda
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Torrance, CA USA 90501

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West Building
Washington, DC USA 20590

Consumers Union
101 Truman Avenue
Yonkers, New York 10703

ET
32713
SMD

Log of Service Attempts to Correct Vibration

Vin # 1 H G C P 3 F 8 3 C A [REDACTED]

Owners: [REDACTED]

New Providence, NJ USA [REDACTED]

- 9-22-12...Purchased new Accord EX-L V6 from Madison Honda.
- 9-23-12...**Returned the car** because of shimmy (vibration) at highway speed.
Madison Honda balanced wheels and returned car to us (no paper work).
Car still vibrates...no change.
- 9-26-12 Trip to Vermont. Vibration present, but we were able to find a speed at which the vibration was less noticeable (around 68 mph).
- 10-10-12 **Returned the car for the second time** to service dept. We spoke with Brian Parente, Service Manger.
Madison Honda acknowledged problem still exists, again balanced wheels, and also replaced a tire.
Madison Honda acknowledged that the vibration still existed after this attempted repair, but returned vehicle to us.
- 10-18-12 We met with Brian to discuss the problem. We pointed out that the problem was not unique to this vehicle, and that there is a website in which others are complaining of the same problem with not solutions. We asked if there was a service bulletin or recall and were told none existed. We asked for a copy of the notification that Brian had sent to Honda of America, but were told we were not entitled to a copy. Upon my complaint, we were asked to wait until a Honda district manager could evaluate the car.
- 11-15-12 We were notified by phone that the district manager recommended changing the tires on the car. Those tires had to be ordered, and we would be notified when they were in.
- 11-20-12 Trip to Vermont. Vibration present, but we were able to find a speed at which the vibration was not too noticeable (around 68 mph).
- 11-28-12 **Returned the car for the third time.** Madison Honda replaced all four tires and reported the problem to be no longer present.
- 11-29-12 We called to report that the problem still existed. Service Manager Brian Parente agreed to ride in the car to observe the vibration.
- 12-4-12 Brian rode in the car as a passenger and acknowledged the problem was still present. He asked that we await further instructions from him.
- 12-14-12 **Returned car for the fourth time.** Madison Honda attempted once again to resolve the vibration problem. After some attempts, they test drove the car and observed that the problems still existed. The car was returned to us as we needed it for a trip to Pennsylvania for the weekend. Brian said he will now seek other 2012 vehicles that do not exhibit the problem and use them as a basis of comparison.
We met with Brian before leaving with the car and explained that we needed to have the car repaired in time for our upcoming trip to Florida (leaving on 12-29). Brian said he would call us the following week (of 12-19).
- 12-15-12 On ride to Pennsylvania, the vibration problem was decidedly worst than ever. The vibration is now felt by the passenger, and there is no longer a speed between 58 and 73 where the vibration is not present (we were unwilling to drive faster than 73).
It is clear that we can no longer consider driving the car to Florida (or on any highway trip in its current condition).
- 12-17-12 We called and left message on Brian's voice mail essentially same text as preceding paragraph (12-15-12). Called again in PM and left message for Brian to call us. He called back and said it was now going to the highest echelon of Honda. He said he would call back later or tomorrow.
We filed a complaint with the NHTSA via website on this day.

12-18-12 Brian called and reported that the matter was now at the highest level of Honda. They are sending out a Field Engineer who will fly to NJ from California on Jan 2. However, knowing that we want the car for our Florida trip, Brian found a 4-cyl 2012 Accord that did not exhibit a vibration. He also discovered that it shared the same front suspension parts with the V6 models, so he asked that we turn the car over to him today so that he can attempt to cure the problem by swapping parts with the "good" car. He mentioned that the technician who would do this work would be going on vacation after today.

Brian said that if this did not succeed, he could make the car back to what it was before the recent "repair" that made it worse. Since we will be in Florida for the month of January, then the Field Engineer would come in February.

Based on this we Returned the car for the fifth time. We were given a loaner car.

12-18-12 Brian called late afternoon...said he drove several other 2012 Accords and all of them had a vibration problem...some less, some more. He said they have done a number of things to the car and would like to have it for another day to do more experimenting.

12-19-12 Brian called to say he was driving in the car and it no longer vibrated. He had swapped wheels (rims and tires) with another Accord that was ok. The other Accord had the same type wheels and tires, but had 8,000 miles on it. I met Brian and we went for a drive. The car was significantly better, with only a very slight vibration noted at just 65 mph. (Brian concurred, saying that all cars have some amount of vibration). At other speeds no vibration was observed. I said I was willing to take back the car as it is, but reserved the option to return it for more work if the condition worsened. Brian agreed to that. He asked to keep the car for another day so they could mount our original tires on the wheels that had been swapped. Brian also explained that Honda would offer some compensation for the older wheels as well as for our continued inconvenience since September.

12-20-12 Brian called (2 PM). He said the car was still ok, but he got a call from the Field Engineer who was scheduled to come out on Jan 2. She recommended that he conduct some other procedures before returning the car to us. This is his last day of work for the week. He said he hoped to have the car back on the road by 3 PM and call us back before he leaves. I told him we would only be available until about 4:30 pm.

I happened to mention at this time that I was concerned about what will occur when in the future I have to rotate the tires. Brian agreed that we don't know how the rotation of the tires would affect the situation.

12-20-12 Brian called to say that they had completed all the procedures that Honda had instructed them to do, and that the car was essentially the same as it had been the day before. We could come pick it up. He asked that we call him after Christmas and we'll "take it from there."

12-21-12 We picked up the car. It drives the same as before. We will plan to take it on the trip to Florida, hoping the condition remains mostly benign and doesn't worsen.

12-27-12 Called Brian Parente as requested. Brian feels that the dealer has done all that can be done, with the exception of the field engineer coming out to evaluate the situation (the field engineer was to be in NJ on Jan 2, but we will have left for Florida by then).

12-28-12 Called American Honda Customer Relations and reported the entire story in detail. American Honda rep said they do not have copies of the service records, but that they are in a data base filed by VIN. She asked for our previous Honda experiences and was apologetic that we had suffered this problem for so long. She wanted to have the field engineer come out to look at it. Since we would be traveling to Fla for the month of January, she said she would like to have a field manager come look at it there. She said a regional case manager would be calling us back, but would not be able to do so until after Jan 2. I gave her both of our cell phone numbers as well as my email address.

1-2-13 While in Florida, we received a call from American Honda Customer Relations. The agent said she had no idea why anyone told me they would send a field manager to Florida to evaluate the car. She said "We are in California; we don't ever do that. It must have been a trainee that told you that." She asked me if I had a case number, and I told her I was not at home at the time, and could not answer the question. She told me to resume the inquiry after I returned to New Jersey in February. *Later I looked at my notes and found I had no record of a case number.*

2-3-13 Arrived home from Florida. Condition did not worsen on trip (over 2500 miles), but is still in evidence at certain speeds, especially around 68 mph.

2-11-13 Returned car to Madison Honda for sixth visit and had tires (wheels) rotated front-to-back, and back-to-front. There was no significant difference in the vibration as a result of this tire rotation.

2-13-13 Called American Honda to resume inquiry. Spoke to "Sean."

Got a case number: N012012-12-2801145

Our case manager's name will be Marion. Sean said she will call us within the next business day using the [REDACTED] phone number.

2-14-13 Marion called today. She said she had spoken to Brian Parente. He had mentioned that I would be seeing him next week after I returned home from a brief trip to Vermont. I explained that he asked me to let him know how it went on the trip to VT. She said she would speak to a field agent and call me next Tuesday. Marion's number is 800-999-1009 extension 117737.

2-20-13 Call from Brian at Madison Honda: Madison Honda wants to have a field engineer test drive the car. Wants car on Monday, Feb. 25 before noon. They need to have the car on Tuesday, Feb 26, and it should be available for us to pick it up late on the 26th. It's possible we won't be able to pick it back up until Wednesday. I agreed to have the car there on the morning of the 25th. Brian agreed to provide a loaner car at no expense.

I expressed to Brian that I had some concern that the engineer might say he doesn't feel any vibration problem, as it is now quite a bit less than originally, and I told him that the vibration is most noticeable between 65 and 72 mph, with 68-70 the most pronounced. The steering wheel can be seen to vibrate slightly at that speed, and if one holds the steering wheel lightly, the vibration is easily evident. I said I would resent having the engineer say he didn't feel a vibration, and Brian said, "That's not going to happen. I'll be riding with him."

Brian called back and said that since the engineer is coming out from California, we can't cancel this appointment, even if Brian has to come and get the car from us.

2-21-13 Marion called me to confirm that American Honda is sending out an engineer to look at the car on Tuesday, Feb 26.

2-25-13 **Returned car to Madison Honda for seventh time:** Brian said they may want to keep the car for more than one day. I asked to have the oil changed while it was there.

2-18-13 Brian called to say the car was ready. He said that they had driven the car over 180 miles. He also said that he and the engineer were pleased that the vibration that they observed on first driving the car was "90% improved" over what it had been previously.

The field engineer performed a radial force balance and index on all 4 tires. They also fine tuned the balance and wheel alignment and adjusted the steering rack preload. They were satisfied upon road testing that there was no vibration, only "road feel." I asked Brian if I would receive a report from American Honda and he said no...it was internal records only. I said, "So they did stuff to my car, but they won't tell me what they did?" Brian said that was correct. Brian also said that this was the end of the matter; there was nothing more Honda could do.

I expressed to Brian that my wife and I both felt we were owed some compensation for all of our inconvenience, extra miles and wear on the car, loss of use, and being faced with uncertainty as to whether the problem will recur at some point in the future. After I test drive the car, I will contact American Honda to discuss compensation.

3-3-13 Today we drove on the highway for the first time since the work by the engineer was performed. The vibration is still as noticeable as before, perhaps even worse than before this latest activity. I cannot believe that the engineer drove the car and said there was no vibration. I do not believe that the engineer did not detect the vibration.

3-14-13 Marion from American Honda called. She asked me how the car was. I told her it's a little worse than it was before the engineer came. She said the engineer was satisfied that he only felt "road feel," and that there was no more that American Honda would or could do. She also said that the recording of our conversation and the documentation from the engineer was proprietary and would not be available to me. She also said that it is the policy of American Honda not to compensate customers for their inconvenience, or any warranty matters. I would not even be compensated for having to have a set of used wheels on my new car. I asked her, suppose that the service mgr at Madison Honda would drive the car and confirm that the vibration was clearly still in evidence. **She said it wouldn't matter what he said, because he is not an engineer!** She said she would notate my concerns in their file. She suggested further that I could look into consumer rights. I said goodbye and hung up.



New Providence, NJ

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