



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

## ODI RESUME

Investigation: RQ 03-007  
 Prompted By: CONSUMER COMPLAINTS  
 Date Opened: 10/14/2003 Date Closed: 02/27/2004  
 Principal Investigator: L. Strickland *LS*  
 Subject: Seat Belt Buckle False Latch/Malfunction

Manufacturer: Kia Motors America, Inc.  
 Products: 1999-2001 Kia Sephia and 1999-2002 Kia Sportage  
 Population: 362,730

Problem Description: Driver Side Safety Belt Buckles May Experience False Latch or No Latch Condition

### FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	8	78	86
Crashes/Fires:	0	35	35
Injury Incidents:	0	30	30
# Injuries:	0	36	36
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	1893	1893

\*Description of Other: Warranty Claims

Action: This RQ has been upgraded to an Engineering Analysis (EA04-007)

Engineer: Leamon H. Strickland *LS*  
 Div. Chief: Thomas Z. Cooper  
 Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 02/27/2004  
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#### Summary:

Information received and analyzed during this RQ disclosed that M.Y. 1999 and 2000 Kia Sephia and Sportage vehicles were equipped with modified versions of the same safety belt latch assembly as those recalled in Campaign No 02V-216. These latch assemblies were identified and Type A97. ODI analysis indicates a continuing trend of consumer complaints following a series of design modifications made by Kia to improve the A97 latch assembly. M.Y. 2001 and 2002 subject vehicles were equipped with different design latch assemblies (Type DB-6 or Autoliv) and exhibit a much lower complaint count.

This RQ has been upgraded to an EA in order to further investigate this matter for the subject vehicles equipped with Type A97 latch assemblies.

*DD 3/1/04*