



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  
Principal Investigator: LEE STRICKLAND  
Subject: SAFETY BELT BUCKLE MALFUNCTION

Manufacturer: KIA MOTORS AMERICA, INC.  
Products: 1999-2001 KIA SEPHIA AND 1999-2002 KIA SPORTAGE  
Population: 400,000

Problem Description: Driver side safety belt buckles may experience false latch or no latch condition.

## FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	9	0	9
Crashes/Fires:	1	0	1
Injury Incidents:	1	0	1
# Injuries:	1	0	1
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	0	0

\*Description Of Other:

Action: A recall query has been opened.

Engineer: Leamon H. Strickland

Date: 10/14/2003

Div. Chief: Thomas Z. Cooper *TZC*

Date: 10/14/2003

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 10/14/2003

Summary: ODI has received 9 consumer complaints that allege the front driver's side safety belt buckles may give false indication of secure latching. In such circumstances the condition may expose the driver to risk of injury during a crash.

ODI previously investigated this issue under PE02-051, for model year 1995 -1998 Kia Sephia and Sportage vehicles. The investigation resulted in the recall of approximately 190,000 vehicles and the campaign was identified as NHTSA No. 02V216000. Additional complaints of similar nature involving later model years of Kia Sephia and Sportage models have since been received.

The subject recall query has been opened to review the scope of the prior recall, and to determine whether later model years of these vehicles contain the same safety defect.

*Cab  
10-15-03*