

VOLKSWAGEN



3800 Honda Road
Auburn Hills, MI 48026
Tel. (248) 754-3000

March 2, 2004

Mr. Mark Swanson
Office of Defects Investigation
US Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

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NVS-210
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OFFICE OF DEFECTS
INVESTIGATION

Subject: Follow up questions regarding EA-03-020

Dear Mr. Swanson,

In accordance with your January 21, 2004 verbal request for additional information, we have enclosed the following responses. For clarity purposes, we will repeat your request and then respond with the appropriate answer.

Request 1

What is the context of Faurecia's surveillance testing showing the handful of bolt fractures?

- a) What purpose are the tests?
- b) How frequent?
- c) What is the sample rate?
- d) Are the tests done by batches of production?

Response 1

- a) Monitoring of current production for quality assurance purposes.
- b) An average of 16-17 instrument panels are tested per month (instrument panels manufactured for all worldwide production, not US specific).
- c) The sample rate is approximately between 0.04% to 0.05%, based on an approximate monthly production of 30,000 to 40,000 dashboards.
- d) The instrument panels used for testing are randomly taken from production.

Request 2

NHTSA would like to have ALL of the videos of the surveillance testing, not just 2.

Response 2

Volkswagen does not possess copies of the video coverage of the production surveillance testing conducted by Faurecia. Such videos are the property of Faurecia and are in its possession. Volkswagen has requested this information from Faurecia. Volkswagen has been advised that over time Faurecia has used various formats which are incompatible with the NTSC standard used in the United States. Volkswagen has been informed that assembling, converting and copying of the production surveillance testing with respect to the tests performed for worldwide markets will take approximately two months.

Request 3

The videos that were supplied (Faurecia and VW): which design level do they show?

Response 3

The production surveillance testing videos previously obtained from Faurecia as well the Volkswagen "full vehicle crash tests" supplied to NHTSA in the context of the EA all show the design stage with 4.8 welded bolts.

The videos of Volkswagen tests AK030101 to AK030103 all depict tests with intentionally weakened 4.8 welded bolts. The tests were intended to simulate the fracture of the bolts. Volkswagen test AK030104 depicts the same test with intentionally weakened 8.8 press-fitted bolts. (Please refer to EA-response, question 8).

Request 4

What was the torque/angle recorded values on the 17 that fractured?

Response 4

VW has requested this information from its supplier. According to information obtained from the supplier, the fastening nuts were tightened to the prescribed torque of 2.5 Nm (+/- 20%), with automatic torque wrenches that were regularly calibrated and monitored.

Request 5

Why is the surveillance testing done at temperature extremes?

Response 5

Volkswagen vehicles are sold in markets throughout the world where climatic extremes are more prevalent than in some other markets. Volkswagen therefore tests and requires its suppliers to test many vehicle components at extreme temperatures in addition to those more commonly encountered. These temperature ranges are:

-35° C → -31° F

21° C → 70° F

85° C → 185° F

Sincerely,



John Maddox
Product Compliance