



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

## ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 04-053  
 Prompted By: NHTSA R&D Testing  
 Date Opened: 07/26/2004      Date Closed: 11/22/2004  
 Principal Investigator: Peter C. Ong  
 Subject: Frontal Driver Air Bag

Manufacturer: American Honda Motor Co.  
 Products: 2004 Honda Accord  
 Population: 341,952

Problem Description: The frontal driver air bag did not fully inflate during two NHTSA tests.

### FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	0	0	0
Crashes/Fires:	0	0	0
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
# Injuries:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	2	0	2

\*Description of Other: NHTSA R&D vehicle compatibility testing

Action: This preliminary investigation is closed (see attached recall 04V551)

Engineer: Peter C. Ong *PCO*

Date: 11/22/2004

Div. Chief: Thomas Z. Cooper

Date: 11/22/2004

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 11/22/2004

Summary: During two of 13 NHTSA Research & Development compatibility crash tests, the driver-side frontal airbag failed to properly deploy due to a large tear in the airbag fabric. Both R&D test vehicles that contained a failed air bag were 4-door, 4-cylinder (L4) vehicles. Subsequent static and dynamic tests conducted by Honda revealed that during severe crash conditions, the airbag fabric can snag the inside surface of the airbag module cover at the emblem attachment points. Honda reports that the air bag module and cover design are unique to the 4-door, 4-cylinder subject vehicles.

On November 17, 2004, Honda notified the agency that it would recall 228,932 model year (MY) 2004 and 28,428 early-MY 2005 Accord L4 sedans (up through early-October, 2004). As part of the recall remedy, Honda will install an additional piece of protective fabric/flap between the airbag and the inside airbag module cover. See NHTSA recall 04V551 for details. In addition, there are approximately 250 exported Accord vehicles included in this recall. The V-6 models and the 2-door, 4-cylinder models are not included based on different air bag and air bag module cover designs. This investigation is closed.

*Ford  
11/23/04*

# HONDA

American Honda Motor Co., Inc.  
1919 Torrance Boulevard  
Torrance, CA 90501-2746  
Phone (310) 753-2000

November 17, 2004

04V-551

Mr. Kenneth Weinstein,  
Associate Administrator  
Office of Safety Assurance  
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY  
ADMINISTRATION  
400 Seventh St., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (HMC) is furnishing notification to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in accordance with 49 CFR Part 573 Defect and Noncompliance Reports related to the vehicles listed below.

**573.6(c)(1)**

**Name of manufacturer:** Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (HMC)  
Honda of America Manufacturing, Inc. (HAM)  
Honda de Mexico, S.A. DE C.V. (HDM)

**Manufacturer's agent:** William R. Willen  
American Honda Motor Co., Inc.  
1919 Torrance Blvd.  
Torrance, CA 90501-2746

**573.6(c)(2)**

**Identification of potentially affected vehicles:**

<u>Make/Model</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>VIN/Dates of Manufacture</u>
Honda Accord L4 sedan	All 2004 model year	1HGCM5***4A000013 - 1HGCM5***4A179872 May 14, 2003 to Aug. 25, 2004
		JHMCM5***4C000001 - JHMCM5***4C041070 Feb. 13, 2003 to Jul. 5, 2004
		3HGCM5***4G700003 - 3HGCM5***4G712482 Oct. 1, 2003 to Aug. 30, 2004
Certain 2005 model year		1HGCM5***5A000006 - 1HGCM5***5A023044 Mar. 25, 2004 to Oct. 1, 2004
		JHMCM5***5C000001 - JHMCM5***5C005198 Mar. 28, 2004 to Oct. 5, 2004
		3HGCM5***5G700001 - 3HGCM5***5G700722 Jul. 1, 2004 to Sept. 30, 2004

**Description of the basis for the determination of the recall population:**

The affected airbag design is unique to the vehicles above. The 2003 model year Accord 4D 4-cylinder design is different. The Accord V6 Sedan and Accord Coupe airbags are made by a different manufacturer and have a different design. A countermeasure has been applied to the airbags of vehicles after the affected VIN range.

573.8(c)(3)

**Total number of vehicles potentially affected: 257,616**

573.8(c)(4)

**Percentage of affected vehicles that contain the defect: 100%**

573.8(c)(5)

**Defect description:**

The 2004 Accord was used in vehicle compatibility testing conducted by NHTSA R&D. NHTSA's research test program subjects vehicles to conditions more severe than the current standards. The 2004 Accord complies with all current requirements of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 208, "Occupant Crash Protection." However, in the specific conditions of one research test configuration, a tear in the fabric of the driver's front airbag occurred after apparent contact with the inside surface of the airbag cover during deployment. A torn airbag may not offer the same level of protection, thereby increasing the risk of injury to the driver. No consumer incidents have been reported.

Honda is instituting this recall to resolve the concerns of NHTSA. An extensive number of tests, including crash testing, have been conducted on behalf of Honda in an attempt to replicate the result of the NHTSA tests, but the tests were unable to do so except in highly unusual, unrealistic circumstances. However, Honda does not wish to dispute NHTSA's concerns and is interested in minimizing any potential risk to motor vehicle safety, even though the subject event would be an extremely unlikely occurrence.

573.8(c)(6)

**Chronology:**

Apr. 20, 2004	During NHTSA's vehicle compatibility research testing, the first incident occurred.
Apr. 28, 2004	HMC investigated the test vehicle with NHTSA and initiated an investigation.
Jun. 29, 2004	A second incident occurred during NHTSA's vehicle compatibility research test.
Jul. 8, 2004	HMC investigated the test vehicle with NHTSA.

**573.8(c)(8)**

**Chronology: (cont.)**

Jul. 20, 2004	HMC conducted a vehicle-to-vehicle test under the same conditions as NHTSA's test, and no incident occurred. HMC continued the investigation.
Oct. 20, 2004	HMC had a technical meeting with NHTSA.
Nov. 10, 2004	HMC ended the investigation and initiated safety recall.

**573.8(c)(8)(i)**

**Program for remedying the defect:**

The owners of all affected vehicles will be notified by mail and asked to take their vehicle to an authorized Honda dealer. The dealer will install a protective fabric flap between the airbag module cover and the inner module, free of charge.

**573.8(c)(8)(ii)**

<b>Estimated date to e-mail preliminary notice to dealers:</b>	Nov. 18, 2004
<b>Estimated date to provide preliminary service bulletin to dealers:</b>	Nov. 19, 2004
<b>Estimated date to provide final service bulletin to dealers:</b>	Dec. 3, 2004
<b>Estimated date to begin sending notifications to owners:</b>	Dec. 6, 2004
<b>Estimated date of completion of the notification:</b>	Dec. 17, 2004

**573.8(c)(9)**

**Representative copies of all notices, bulletins and other communications:**

A copy of the dealer service bulletin and text of the final customer notification letter will be submitted to your office as soon as possible.

573.6(c)(10)

**Proposed owner notification letter submission:**

A draft of the owner notification will be sent to your office for review as soon as possible.

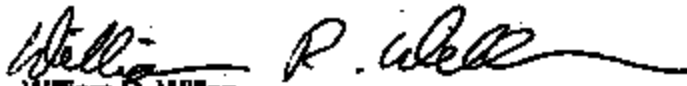
573.6(c)(11)

**Manufacturer's campaign number:**

P54.

Sincerely,

AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO., INC.



William R. Willen  
Managing Counsel  
Product Regulatory Office

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