



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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 05-053
Date Opened: 09/27/2005 Date Closed: 03/01/2006
Principal Investigator: Michael Lee
Subject: Air Bag Warning Lamp Illumination

Manufacturer: Bayerische Motoren Werke (BMW)
Products: 2002-2003 MINI Cooper
Population: 50,404

Problem Description: The air bag warning lamp can illuminate due to high electrical resistance in the side air bag and/or seat belt pretensioner deployment circuit due to an improper wire crimp in the circuit.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	15	132	147
Crashes/Fires:	0	0	0
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
# Injuries:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	11,580	11,580

*Description of Other: Warranty Claims

Action: This Preliminary Evaluation has been closed.

Engineer: Michael Lee MJL

Date: 03/01/2006

Div. Chief: Thomas Z. Cooper

Date: 03/01/2006

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 03/01/2006

Summary: In March 2006, BMW reissued a service bulletin first issued in September 2003, to MINI dealers regarding the repair procedure for improper wire crimps in approximately 31,500 model year 2002 and 2003 MINI Cooper vehicles produced up to January 2003. The new service bulletin states that the warranty coverage for the issue (i.e., air bag warning lamp illumination with fault code for high resistance in side air bag/seat belt pretensioner circuit) is extended to 10 years or 150,000 miles, whichever occurs first. BMW plans to send letters to owners during March 2006.

The subject wire crimps are located under the front seats and are part of the main wiring harness that interface with the under-seat wiring harness connectors for side air bag and seat belt pretensioner modules. BMW stated that, although the subject crimps were improperly manufactured, the crimp connection is still sufficient for the restraint system to deploy when needed. According to BMW, the electrical resistance levels in the subject vehicles can exceed the threshold that illuminates the air bag warning lamp, but they do not exceed a much higher limit in which deployment of the restraints may no longer occur. ODI believes that there is lack of evidence at this time to conclude that the restraint systems may not deploy with the high resistance condition.

The agency believes that further expenditure of agency resources does not appear to be warranted at this time. The closing of this investigation does not constitute a finding by NHTSA that no safety-related defect exists. The agency will monitor the issue and reserves the right to take future action if warranted by the circumstances.

MJL 3/6/06