



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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 06-049

Date Opened: 11/09/2006

Date Closed: 02/27/2007

Principal Investigator: Sonny Murianka

Subject: Wheelchair Lift Micro-Switch disabled

Manufacturer: Freightliner LLC

Products: Thomas Built 2006-07 Class "A" School Buses w/Wheelchair Lifts

Population: 350

Problem Description: Wheel Chair Interlock System Disabled

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	31	31	31
Crashes/Fires:	1	0	1
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
# Injuries:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	0	0

*Description of Other:

Action: This PE is closed. Freightliner has filed a safety recall to correct all affected buses. Recall number 07V-040 has been assigned. A copy is attached.

Engineer: Sonny Murianka

Date: 02/27/2007

Div. Chief: Richard Boyd

Date: 02/27/2007

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 02/27/2007

Summary: This investigation was opened after ODI was contacted by a school bus fleet alleging that they had discovered numerous buses with "Zip-Ties" securing the wheelchair door micro-switch in the closed position. This would defeat the safety interlock system that prevents the bus from being moved unless the wheelchair lift is in the fully stowed position. ODI is aware of one alleged crash related to this issue.

Freightliner started using the plastic "Zip-Ties" on the 2006 Model Class "A" buses. The "Zip-Ties" were installed to enable the bus to be moved down the vehicle assembly line while the lift was still in the down position. Use of the "Zip-Ties" is unique to the subject buses.

Freightliner will conduct a recall to inspect all affected buses for "Zip-Ties" that were not removed before delivery of the buses. Any "Zip-Ties" located during the inspection will be removed.

The recall action taken by Freightliner resolves the issues raised by this investigation. Accordingly, this investigation is closed.

RECEIVED

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OF 07V-040

Timothy Blubaugh
Director
Government Technical Affairs

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February 5, 2007

Dan Smith
Associate Administrator for Vehicle Safety
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Defect Information Report FL-490, Plastic Zip Ties Found on Wheel chair Interlock Switches

Mr. Smith:

In accordance with Part 573 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Freightliner LLC herewith reports a safety campaign to recall approximately 350 Thomas Built Bus Minotour school buses found to have plastic zip ties around the wheelchair lift interlock switch.

Attached is Freightliner's Defect Information Report.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,



Timothy Blubaugh

Cc: Michael Mason, CAL-OSHA
Enclosure
Certified Mail#70023150000414054509



A DaimlerChrysler Company

Defect Information Report (Section 673.6)

January 30, 2007

(c)(1) **Manufacturer:** Freightliner LLC
P.O. BOX 3849
Portland, Oregon 97208
(503) 745-5210

Brands: Thomas Built Buses

(c)(2) **Vehicles Identification:**
Model(s) affected: Minotour School Bus
Model Years affected: 2006, 2007
Manufacture Dates: July 1, 2006 through November 1, 2006
Basis for determining population: Buses built with a wheel chair lift option
Component manufacturer if other than the vehicle manufacturer: N/A

(c)(3) **Total number of vehicles potentially affected:** approximately 350

(c)(4) **Percentage of vehicles estimated to contain the defect:** 10%

(c)(5) **Description of the defect:** Plastic zip ties were found around wheel chair lift interlock switches. The zip tie may prevent the switch from operating, defeating the interlock function.
49CFR Section 577.5(f) Evaluation of the risk to motor vehicle safety: Defeating the wheel chair lift interlock switch allows the bus to be driven with the lift still deployed.

(c)(6) **Chronology of principal events:** Several customer buses in one fleet were found with plastic zip ties around wheel chair interlock switches. The origination of the plastic tie is not clear, though Thomas Bus uses them on the Minotour model bus to protect the switch during the vehicle assembly process. Use of a plastic tie for this purpose is unique to the Minotour model assembly procedure.

(c)(7) **Noncompliance-test or other data:** N/A

(c)(8) **Remedial program:** The vehicles will be inspected and any zip ties found on the switches will be removed. Repairs will be performed by Freightliner Dealerships and Direct Warranty customers.

Estimated Owner Notification Date: Customer notification will be by first class mail using Freightliner records to determine the customers affected. This will be completed approximately March 30, 2007

Reimbursement Plan: Copies will be submitted as a supplemental report when available.

(c)(9) **Communications sent to dealers and owners:** Copies will be submitted as a supplemental report when available.

(c)(10) **Copy of proposed owner notification letter:** A draft will be sent for ODI review when available.

(c)(11) **Manufacturer's campaign number:** FL-480