



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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 06-057
Date Opened: 11/21/2006 Date Closed: 03/30/2007
Principal Investigator: Sonny Murianka
Subject: Seat Belts Webbing Abrading on Frame

Manufacturer: Freightliner LLC, Thomas Built Buses, Inc.
Products: Thomas Built Class "A", FS-65, MVP-EF,ER,HDX-EF 1999-2001
Population: 11265

Problem Description: The seat belt webbing is being cut by the sharp edge of the seat brackets. Bus production dates are 1/23/94 - 4/15/02 (School Buses).

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	2	19	19
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	0	0

*Description of Other:

Action: This PE is closed. Freightliner will conduct a safety recall. Recall number 07V-142 has been assigned. The recall will include school buses built from 1994 through April 2002.

Engineer: Sonny Murianka
Div. Chief: Richard Boyd
Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 03/30/2007
Date: 03/30/2007
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Summary: This investigation was opened after ODI received notification from two fleets alleging the discovery of numerous seat belts with cut webbing as a result of the webbing abrading against an underseat metal bracket. The subject vehicles are Class "A" School Buses weighing under 10,000 pounds. They are required by Federal Standard FMVSS 208 to have seat belts.

As a result of this investigation, Freightliner will conduct a safety recall to inspect all affected buses for seat belt chafing and will replace damaged belts as needed. Also, the seat belt retainer strip will be modified or replaced to prevent future chafing.

Freightliner expanded the scope of the recall (beyond the original investigation population) to include approximately 10,251 additional buses having gross vehicle weight ratings greater than 10,000 lbs. They determined that these buses are also susceptible to the chafing action. There is no federal requirement for seat belts in school buses weighing over 10,000 pounds. However, some customers have ordered seat belts and some states have requirements for seat belts. Therefore, freightliner has agreed to address those buses even though there is no applicable Federal Standard.

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



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of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

MAR 27 2007

400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

MR. NASSER ZAMANI
MANAGER GOVERNMENT TECHNICAL AFFAIRS
FREIGHTLINER LLC
4747 NORTH CHANNEL AVENUE
PORTLAND, OR 97208-3849

NVS-215kjs
07V-142

Subject: SEAT BELT FRAY

Dear MR. ZAMANI:

This letter is to acknowledge your recent defect information report. Please review the following information to ensure that it conforms to your records as this information is being made available to the public. If the information does not agree with your records, please contact us immediately to discuss your concerns.

Makes/Models/Model Years:

THOMAS/FS-65/1994-2002
THOMAS/HDX EF/1994-2002
THOMAS/MINOTOUR/1994-2002
THOMAS/MVP EF/1994-2002

NHTSA Campaign Number: 07V-142

Mfg's Report Date: March 26, 2007

Components:
SEAT BELTS

Potential Number of Units Affected: 11,265

Summary:

CERTAIN MY 1994 THROUGH 2002 THOMAS BUILT MINOTOUR, FS-65, MVP-EF, ER, AND HDX-EF SCHOOL BUSES MANUFACTURED BETWEEN JANUARY 23, 1994, AND APRIL 15, 2002. THE SEAT BELT MAY CHAFE ON THE EDGE OF A METAL BRACKET AND WEAR PREMATURELY.

Consequence:

IN THE EVENT OF A VEHICLE CRASH, THE SEAT OCCUPANT MAY NOT BE PROPERLY RESTRAINED, POSSIBLY RESULTING IN PERSONAL INJURY.

Remedy:

THOMAS BUILT WILL NOTIFY OWNERS AND REPLACE ANY CHAFED SEAT BELTS AND REPLACE OR MODIFY THE RETAINER STRIP TO PREVENT ANY FURTHER CHAFING. THE RECALL IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN ON MAY 25, 2007. OWNERS MAY CALL THOMAS BUILT AT 336-889-4871 OR CONTACT FREIGHTLINER AT 800-547-0712.

Notes:

FREIGHTLINER RECALL NO. FL-495. CUSTOMERS MAY CONTACT THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION'S VEHICLE SAFETY HOTLINE AT 1-888-327-4236 (TTY: 1-800-424-9153); OR GO TO [HTTP://WWW.SAFERCAR.GOV](http://WWW.SAFERCAR.GOV).

This recall is the result of an investigation, PE06-057, conducted by the Office of Defects Investigation.

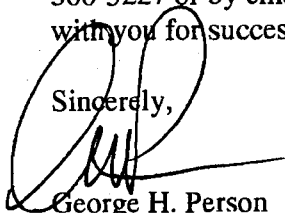
Please provide the following additional information and be reminded of the following requirements:

You are required to submit a draft owner notification letter to this office no less than five days prior to mailing it to the customers. Also, copies of all notices, bulletins, dealer notifications, and other communications that relate to this recall, including a copy of the final owner notification letter and any subsequent owner follow-up notification letter(s), are required to be submitted to this office no later than 5 days after they are originally sent (if they are sent to more than one manufacturer, distributor, dealer, or purchaser/owner).

As stated in Part 573.7, submission of the first of six consecutive quarterly status reports is required within one month after the close of the calendar quarter in which notification to purchasers occurs. As stated in your report, the recall is expected to begin on May 25, 2007. Therefore, the first quarterly report will be due in this office on or before 30 days after the close of the calendar quarter.

Your contact for this recall will be Kelly Schuler, who may be reached by phone at 202-366-5227 or by email at KELLY.SCHULER@DOT.GOV. We look forward to working with you for successful completion of this recall campaign.

Sincerely,



George H. Person
Chief, Recall Management Division
Office of Defects Investigation
Enforcement

07V-142
(2 pages)



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2007 MAR 27 P 3:28

OFFICE OF DEFECTS
INVESTIGATION

Nasser Zamani
Manager
Government Technical Affairs

Freightliner LLC
4747 N. Channel Ave
Portland, OR 97217
503-745-8910 Phone
503-745-5544 Fax
NasserZamani@Freightliner.com

March 26, 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-495, Thomas Built School Bus Seat Belt Installations

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 11,265 Thomas Built Minotour, FS65, MVP and HDX school buses built from January 1994 through April 2002 for a defect in the seat belt installation that may cause the seat belt to wear prematurely.

School buses are designed to provide occupant crash protection through 'compartmentalization,' an approach that has been adopted in the federal motor vehicle safety standards. Compartmentalization relies primarily on seat spacing and padded seat backs to protect occupants in the event of a crash and has been proven effective. Thomas Built additionally provides seat belts on large school buses when requested by customers. Freightliner and Thomas Built have decided to conduct this recall to ensure that seat belts, if requested by customers, operate properly and as expected by the customers.

Attached is Freightliner's Defect Information Report.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

Nasser Zamani
Cc: Michael Mason, CAL-OSHA
Enclosure
Certified Mail#7006345000384084578



A DaimlerChrysler Company

Defect Information Report (Section 573.6)

March 26, 2007

(c)(1) **Manufacturer:** Freightliner LLC
P.O. BOX 3849
Portland, Oregon 97208
(503) 745-6910

Brands: Thomas Built Buses

- (c)(2) **Vehicles identification:**
Model(s) affected: Minotour, FS-65, MVP-EF, ER, HDX-EF
Model Years affected: 1994 - 2002
Manufacture Dates: 1/23/1994 to 4/15/2002
Basis for determining population: The bus models specified above were built with a metal seat belt retainer bracket.
Component manufacturer if other than the vehicle manufacturer: Not Applicable
- (c)(3) **Total number of vehicles potentially affected:** Approximately 1,014 below 10,000 lbs GVWR; Approximately 10,251 above 10,000 lbs GVWR.
- (c)(4) **Percentage of vehicles estimated to contain the defect:** 10%
- (c)(5) **Description of the defect:** The seat belt may chafe on the edge of a metal bracket and wear prematurely.
- (c)(6) **Chronology of principal events:** In 1994, in response to a customer request, Thomas Built began installing a sheet metal bracket that prevents passengers from pushing the seat belts between the seat base and seat back. In November 2006, an inspection found seat belts frayed from chafing on the bracket on a number of Minotour school buses in one fleet. Thomas Built field inspections showed mild abrasion of seat belts in other vehicles.
- (c)(7) **Noncompliance-test or other data:** Not Applicable
- (c)(8) **Remedial program:** All seat belts will be inspected. Those found to be damaged from chafing will be replaced. The seat belt retainer strip will either be replaced or modified to prevent future chafing. Repairs will be performed by Freightliner or Thomas Built dealerships and Direct Warranty customers, i.e., customers approved to do their own warranty repairs. Dealers will be notified by May 21, 2007.
- Estimated Owner Notification Date:** Customer notification will be by first class mail using Freightliner and Thomas Bus records to determine the customers affected. This will be completed approximately May 25, 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-495