



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

JUN 1 2006

400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

**CERTIFIED MAIL**  
**RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

Kent Reeves, Manager  
Technical Compliance & Quality Engineering  
Mitsubishi Motors North America, Inc.  
6400 Katella Avenue  
Cypress, CA 90630-5208

NVS-213aan  
RQ06-007

Dear Mr. Reeves:

This letter is to inform you that the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has opened a Recall Query (RQ06-007) to investigate allegations of hydraulic brake booster accumulator failure resulting in extended stopping distance in certain model year (MY) 2001 through 2002 Mitsubishi Montero vehicles manufactured by Mitsubishi Motors North America, Inc. (Mitsubishi), and to request certain information about these and other Mitsubishi vehicles.

The Office of Defects Investigation has received six complaints alleging hydraulic brake booster accumulator failures on MY 2002 Montero vehicles, resulting in one alleged crash and no injuries. The subject complainant vehicles were all outside the scope of Recall 01V-254 and describe symptoms consistent with the subject recall, such as a loss of brake power-assist resulting in increased pedal effort required to stop or slow the vehicle or an abnormal noise from the left side of the dash panel when the brakes are applied. A copy of each of the reports is enclosed for your information.

Unless otherwise stated in the text, the following definitions apply to these information requests:

- **Subject vehicles:** all MY 2000-2003 Mitsubishi Montero vehicles manufactured for sale or lease in the United States.
- **Subject component:** all hydraulic brake booster accumulators used as original equipment or replacement parts on the subject vehicles.
- **Mitsubishi:** Mitsubishi Motors North America, Inc., and all of its past and present officers and employees, whether assigned to its principal offices or any of its field or other locations, including all of its divisions, subsidiaries (whether or not incorporated)



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and affiliated enterprises and all of their headquarters, regional, zone and other offices and their employees, and all agents, contractors, consultants, attorneys and law firms and other persons engaged directly or indirectly (e.g., employee of a consultant) by or under the control of Mitsubishi (including all business units and persons previously referred to), who are or, in or after 1998, were involved in any way with any of the following related to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles:

- a. Design, engineering, analysis, modification or production (e.g. quality control);
  - b. Testing, assessment or evaluation;
  - c. Consideration, or recognition of potential or actual defects, reporting, record-keeping and information management, (e.g., complaints, field reports, warranty information, part sales), analysis, claims, or lawsuits; or
  - d. Communication to, from or intended for zone representatives, fleets, dealers, or other field locations, including but not limited to people who have the capacity to obtain information from dealers.
- **Alleged defect:** Any one or more of the following symptoms or conditions: (1) alleged malfunction of subject component; (2) alleged loss of, or reduction in, brake power-assist; or (3) any allegation that describes symptoms consistent with a loss of brake power-assist or partial system failure, (i.e., increased brake pedal effort to slow or stop the vehicle, reduced brake effectiveness, abnormal noise heard from the left side of the dash panel.)
  - **Document:** "Document(s)" is used in the broadest sense of the word and shall mean all original written, printed, typed, recorded, or graphic matter whatsoever, however produced or reproduced, of every kind, nature, and description, and all non-identical copies of both sides thereof, including, but not limited to, papers, letters, memoranda, correspondence, communications, electronic mail (e-mail) messages (existing in hard copy and/or in electronic storage), faxes, mailgrams, telegrams, cables, telex messages, notes, annotations, working papers, drafts, minutes, records, audio and video recordings, data, databases, other information bases, summaries, charts, tables, graphics, other visual displays, photographs, statements, interviews, opinions, reports, newspaper articles, studies, analyses, evaluations, interpretations, contracts, agreements, jottings, agendas, bulletins, notices, announcements, instructions, blueprints, drawings, as-builts, changes, manuals, publications, work schedules, journals, statistical data, desk, portable and computer calendars, appointment books, diaries, travel reports, lists, tabulations, computer printouts, data processing program libraries, data processing inputs and outputs, microfilms, microfiches, statements for services, resolutions, financial statements, governmental records, business records, personnel records, work orders, pleadings, discovery in any form, affidavits, motions, responses to discovery, all transcripts, administrative filings and all mechanical, magnetic, photographic and electronic records or recordings of any kind, including any storage media associated with computers, including, but not limited to, information on hard drives, floppy disks, backup tapes, and zip drives, electronic communications, including but not limited to, the Internet and shall include any drafts or revisions pertaining to any of the foregoing, all other things similar to any of the foregoing, however denominated by Mitsubishi, any other data compilations from which information can be obtained, translated if necessary, into a usable form and

any other documents. For purposes of this request, any document which contains any note, comment, addition, deletion, insertion, annotation, or otherwise comprises a non-identical copy of another document shall be treated as a separate document subject to production. In all cases where original and any non-identical copies are not available, "document(s)" also means any identical copies of the original and all non-identical copies thereof. Any document, record, graph, chart, film or photograph originally produced in color must be provided in color. Furnish all documents whether verified by Mitsubishi or not. If a document is not in the English language, provide both the original document and an English translation of the document.

- **Other Terms:** To the extent that they are used in these information requests, the terms "claim," "consumer complaint," "dealer field report," "field report," "fire," "fleet," "good will," "make," "model," "model year," "notice," "property damage," "property damage claim," "rollover," "type," "warranty," "warranty adjustment," and "warranty claim," whether used in singular or in plural form, have the same meaning as found in 49 CFR 579.4.

In order for my staff to evaluate the alleged defect, certain information is required. Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30166, please provide numbered responses to the following information requests. Insofar as Mitsubishi has previously provided a document to ODI, Mitsubishi may produce it again or identify the document, the document submission to ODI in which it was included and the precise location in that submission where the document is located. When documents are produced, the documents shall be produced in an identified, organized manner that corresponds with the organization of this information request letter (including all individual requests and subparts). When documents are produced and the documents would not, standing alone, be self-explanatory, the production of documents shall be supplemented and accompanied by explanation.

Please repeat the applicable request verbatim above each response. After Mitsubishi's response to each request, identify the source of the information and indicate the last date the information was gathered.

- i. State, by model and model year, the number of subject vehicles Mitsubishi has manufactured for sale or lease in the United States. Separately, for each subject vehicle manufactured to date by Mitsubishi, state the following:
  - a. Vehicle identification number (VIN);
  - b. Make;
  - c. Model;
  - d. Model Year;
  - e. Date of manufacture;
  - f. Date warranty coverage commenced;
  - g. The State in the United States where the vehicle was originally sold or leased (or delivered for sale or lease);
  - h. Whether the vehicle was subject to recall 01V-254;
  - i. Whether the subject recall repairs were performed; and
  - j. The date the subject recall repairs were performed.

Provide the table in Microsoft Access 2000, or a compatible format, entitled "PRODUCTION DATA." See Enclosure 1, Data Collection Disc, for a pre-formatted table which provides further details regarding this submission.

2. State the number of each of the following, received by Mitsubishi, or of which Mitsubishi is otherwise aware, which relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles:
  - a. Consumer complaints, including those from fleet operators;
  - b. Field reports, including dealer field reports;
  - c. Reports involving a crash, injury, or fatality, based on claims against the manufacturer involving a death or injury, notices received by the manufacturer alleging or proving that a death or injury was caused by a possible defect in a subject vehicle, property damage claims, consumer complaints, or field reports;
  - d. Property damage claims; and
  - e. Third-party arbitration proceedings where Mitsubishi is or was a party to the arbitration; and
  - f. Lawsuits, both pending and closed, in which Mitsubishi is or was a defendant or codefendant.

For subparts "a" through "d," state the total number of each item (e.g., consumer complaints, field reports, etc.) separately. Multiple incidents involving the same vehicle are to be counted separately. Multiple reports of the same incident are also to be counted separately (i.e., a consumer complaint and a field report involving the same incident in which a crash occurred are to be counted as a crash report, a field report and a consumer complaint).

In addition, for items "c" through "d," provide a summary description of the alleged problem and causal and contributing factors and Mitsubishi's assessment of the problem, with a summary of the significant underlying facts and evidence. For items "e" and "f," identify the parties to the action, as well as the caption, court, docket number, and date on which the complaint or other document initiating the action was filed.

3. Separately, for each item (complaint, report, claim, notice, or matter) within the scope of your response to Request No. 2, state the following information:
  - a. Mitsubishi's file number or other identifier used;
  - b. The category of the item, as identified in Request No. 2 (i.e., consumer complaint, field report, etc.);
  - c. Vehicle owner or fleet name (and fleet contact person), address, and telephone number;
  - d. Vehicle's VIN;
  - e. Vehicle's make, model and model year;
  - f. Vehicle's mileage at time of incident;
  - g. Incident date;
  - h. Report or claim date;
  - i. Whether a crash is alleged;
  - j. Whether property damage is alleged;
  - k. Number of alleged injuries, if any; and
  - l. Number of alleged fatalities, if any.

Provide this information in Microsoft Access 2000, or a compatible format, entitled "REQUEST NUMBER TWO DATA." See Enclosure 1, Data Collection Disc, for a pre-formatted table which provides further details regarding this submission.

4. Produce copies of all documents related to each item within the scope of Request No. 2. Organize the documents separately by category (i.e., consumer complaints, field reports, etc.) and describe the method Mitsubishi used for organizing the documents.
5. State, by model and model year, a total count for all of the following categories of claims, collectively, that have been paid by Mitsubishi to date that relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles: warranty claims; extended warranty claims; claims for good will services that were provided; field, zone, or similar adjustments and reimbursements; and warranty claims or repairs made in accordance with a procedure specified in a technical service bulletin or customer satisfaction campaign.

Separately, for each such claim, state the following information:

- a. Mitsubishi's claim number;
- b. Vehicle owner or fleet name (and fleet contact person) and telephone number;
- c. VIN;
- d. Repair date;
- e. Vehicle mileage at time of repair;
- f. Repairing dealer's or facility's name, telephone number, city and state or ZIP code;
- g. Labor operation number(s);
- h. Problem code(s);
- i. Replacement part number(s) and description(s);
- j. Concern stated by customer; and
- k. Comment, if any, by dealer/technician relating to claim and/or repair.

Provide this information in Microsoft Access 2000, or a compatible format, entitled "WARRANTY DATA." See Enclosure 1, Data Collection Disc, for a pre-formatted table which provides further details regarding this submission.

6. Describe in detail the search criteria used by Mitsubishi to identify the claims identified in response to Request No. 5, including the labor operations, problem codes, part numbers and any other pertinent parameters used. Provide a list of all labor operations, labor operation descriptions, problem codes, and problem code descriptions applicable to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles. State, by make and model year, the terms of the new vehicle warranty coverage offered by Mitsubishi on the subject vehicles (i.e., the number of months and mileage for which coverage is provided and the vehicle systems that are covered). Describe any extended warranty coverage option(s) that Mitsubishi offered for the subject vehicles and state by option, model, and model year, the number of vehicles that are covered under each such extended warranty.
7. Produce copies of all service, warranty, and other documents that relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles, that Mitsubishi has issued to any dealers, regional

or zone offices, field offices, fleet purchasers, or other entities. This includes, but is not limited to, bulletins, advisories, informational documents, training documents, or other documents or communications, with the exception of standard shop manuals. Also include the latest draft copy of any communication that Mitsubishi is planning to issue within the next 120 days.

8. Describe all assessments, analyses, tests, test results, studies, surveys, simulations, investigations, inquiries and/or evaluations (collectively, "actions") that relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles that have been conducted, are being conducted, are planned, or are being planned by, or for, Mitsubishi. For each such action, provide the following information:
  - a. Action title or identifier;
  - b. The actual or planned start date;
  - c. The actual or expected end date;
  - d. Brief summary of the subject and objective of the action;
  - e. Engineering group(s)/supplier(s) responsible for designing and for conducting the action; and
  - f. A brief summary of the findings and/or conclusions resulting from the action.

For each action identified, provide copies of all documents related to the action, regardless of whether the documents are in interim, draft, or final form. Organize the documents chronologically by action.

9. Provide a table summarizing all testing conducted by, or for, Mitsubishi to assess the performance of the brake system in the subject vehicles in the normal condition and in any and all "backup" conditions (e.g., loss of brake power assist, partial system failure). Include the following information in the table: (1) test number; (2) test date; (3) test vehicle description; (4) test description/configuration; and (5) the brake pedal effort, brake pedal travel, maximum deceleration, and stopping distance for each test run. Include in this response all material related to compliance testing/certification for Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 135 S7.11, "Passenger Car Brake Systems/ Brake Power Unit or Brake Power Assist Unit Inoperative (Depleted)." Provide copies of all test reports.
10. Describe all modifications or changes made by, or on behalf of, Mitsubishi in the design, material composition, manufacture, quality control, supply, or installation of the subject components, from the start of production to date, which relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles. For each such modification or change, provide the following information:
  - a. The date or approximate date on which the modification or change was incorporated into vehicle production;
  - b. A detailed description of the modification or change;
  - c. The reason(s) for the modification or change;
  - d. The part numbers (service and engineering) of the original component;
  - e. The part number (service and engineering) of the modified component;
  - f. Whether the original unmodified component was withdrawn from production and/or sale, and if so, when;

- g. When the modified component was made available as a service component; and
- h. Whether the modified component can be interchanged with earlier production components.

Also, provide the above information for any modification or change that Mitsubishi is aware of which may be incorporated into vehicle production within the next 120 days.

11. Produce one of each of the following:

- a. Exemplar sample of each design version of the subject component;
- b. Field return sample of the subject component exhibiting the subject failure mode; and
- c. Any kits that have been released, or developed, by Mitsubishi for use in service repairs to the subject component/assembly which relate, or may relate, to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles.

12. State the number of each of the following that Mitsubishi has sold that may be used in the subject vehicles by component name, part number (both service and engineering/production), model and model year of the vehicle in which it is used and month/year of sale (including the cut-off date for sales, if applicable):

- a. Subject components; and
- b. Any kits that have been released, or developed, by Mitsubishi for use in service repairs to the subject component/assembly.

For each component part number, provide the supplier's name, address, and appropriate point of contact (name, title, and telephone number). Also identify by make, model and model year, any other vehicles of which Mitsubishi is aware that contain the identical component, whether installed in production or in service, and state the applicable dates of production or service usage.

13. Describe (and represent graphically) the amount of boost gain provided by the hydraulic brake booster assembly, measured in terms of hydraulic brake line pressure as a function of the force applied to the brake pedal by the driver, when the hydraulic brake booster assembly is both normally functioning and inoperative/depleted. Also describe (and represent graphically) the relationship between brake pedal travel and the force applied to the brake pedal by the driver when the hydraulic brake booster assembly is both normally functioning and inoperative/depleted. In addition, state the following information:

- a. The brake pedal lever ratio;
- b. The maximum achievable brake pedal height;
- c. The maximum achievable range of brake pedal free play; and
- d. The minimum achievable pedal reserve distance for a normally functioning brake system.

14. Furnish Mitsubishi's assessment of the alleged defect in the subject vehicle, including:

- a. The causal or contributory factor(s);
- b. The failure mechanism(s);
- c. The failure mode(s);
- d. The risk to motor vehicle safety that it poses;

- e. What warnings, if any, the operator and the other persons both inside and outside the vehicle would have that the alleged defect was occurring or subject component was malfunctioning; and
- f. The reports included with this inquiry.

This letter is being sent to Mitsubishi pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30166, which authorizes NHTSA to conduct any investigation that may be necessary to enforce Chapter 301 of Title 49 and to request reports and the production of things. It constitutes a new request for information. Mitsubishi's failure to respond promptly and fully to this letter could subject Mitsubishi to civil penalties pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30165 or lead to an action for injunctive relief pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30163. (Other remedies and sanctions are available as well.) Please note that maximum civil penalties under 49 U.S.C. § 30165 have increased as a result of the recent enactment of the Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation (TREAD) Act, Public Law No. 106-414 (signed November 1, 2000). Section 5(a) of the TREAD Act, codified at 49 U.S.C. § 30165(b), provides for civil penalties of up to \$5,000 per day, with a maximum of \$16,050,000 for a related series of violations, for failing or refusing to perform an act required under 49 U.S.C. § 30166. See 49 CFR 578.6 (as amended by 69 Fed. Reg. 57864 (Sept. 28, 2004)). This includes failing to respond to ODI information requests.

If Mitsubishi cannot respond to any specific request or subpart(s) thereof, please state the reason why it is unable to do so. If on the basis of attorney-client, attorney work product, or other privilege, Mitsubishi does not submit one or more requested documents or items of information in response to this information request, Mitsubishi must provide a privilege log identifying each document or item withheld, and stating the date, subject or title, the name and position of the person(s) from, and the person(s) to whom it was sent, and the name and position of any other recipient (to include all carbon copies or blind carbon copies), the nature of that information or material, and the basis for the claim of privilege and why that privilege applies.

Mitsubishi's response to this letter, in duplicate, together with a copy of any confidentiality request, must be submitted to this office by July 28, 2006. Please refer to RQ06-007 in Mitsubishi's response to this letter. If Mitsubishi finds that it is unable to provide all of the information requested within the time allotted, Mitsubishi must request an extension from me at (202) 366-5207 no later than five business days before the response due date. If Mitsubishi is unable to provide all of the information requested by the original deadline, it must submit a partial response by the original deadline with whatever information Mitsubishi then has available, even if an extension has been granted.

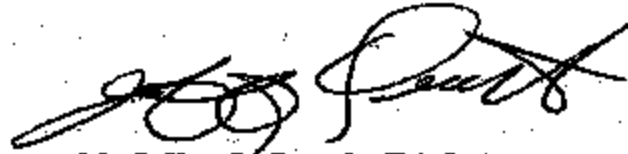
If Mitsubishi claims that any of the information or documents provided in response to this information request constitute confidential commercial material within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(4), or are protected from disclosure pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1905, Mitsubishi must submit supporting information together with the materials that are the subject of the confidentiality request, in accordance with 49 CFR Part 512, as amended (69 Fed. Reg. 21409 et seq; April 21, 2004), to the Office of Chief Counsel (NCC-113), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5219, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Mitsubishi is required to submit two copies of the documents containing allegedly confidential



information (except only one copy of blueprints) and one copy of the documents from which information claimed to be confidential has been deleted.

If you have any technical questions concerning this matter, please call Ms. Andrea A. Noel of my staff at (202) 493-0210.

Sincerely,



Mr. Jeffrey L. Quandt, Chief  
Vehicle Control Division  
Office of Defects Investigation

Enclosure 1, One CD-ROM titled Data Collection Disc containing three Microsoft Access database template files and electronic copies of the six subject VOQs identified by the following ODI numbers: 10111753, 10147008, 10128547, 10155605, 10092744, and 10135164.