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December 5, 2008

NVS-212mjl  
EA08-015

Ms. Kathleen C. DeMeter, Director  
Office of Enforcement  
Office of Defects Investigation  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Ms. DeMeter:

In reply to your letter dated September 22, 2008, we are submitting our response to questions 8-18 regarding allegations of unexpected closing of the power liftgate on 2005-07 Honda Odyssey vehicles equipped with the optional power liftgate feature. We have included our responses to questions 1-7 which were submitted on November 21, 2008. Questions 8-9 and 16-18 include our responses submitted on August 4, 2008 with respect to PE08-026. Attachments or data provided in Access tables on August 4, 2008 or November 21, 2008 are not included in this response.

The documents submitted in response to Question 8, 10, 13 and 14 are being submitted with a request for confidentiality for the reasons noted on the affidavit accompanying the request to the Chief Counsel's Office.

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

Provide the table in Microsoft Access 2000, or a compatible format, entitled "PRODUCTION DATA."

Response: Submitted on Nov. 21, 2008 in response to EA08-015

The data elements "a" through "g" are filed on the enclosed CD.

Model	Model Year	Sales
Odyssey	2005	25,230
	2006	23,984
	2007	20,544

Source(s): Production records  
As of: Oct. 8, 2008

2. State the number of each of the following, received by Honda, or of which Honda is otherwise aware, which relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles:
- Consumer complaints, including those from fleet operators;
  - Field reports, including dealer field reports;
  - 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;
  - Property damage claims;
  - Third-party arbitration proceedings where Honda is or was a party to the arbitration; and
  - Lawsuits, both pending and closed, in which Honda is or was a defendant or codefendant.

For subparts "a" through "f" 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 "f," provide a summary description of the alleged problem and causal and contributing factors, and Honda'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 was filed to initiating the action was filed.

Response: Submitted on Nov. 21, 2008 in response to EA08-015

See Attachment #Q2 for summary description of items "c" through "f"

The total number of reports for items "a" through "f" are stated in the table below.

Note: Honda does not have any Odyssey fleets.

The 2005 lawsuit should have been originally reported in our PE08-026 response but was not included because of different search terms used.

Model	Model Year	A Owner/ Fleet Reports	B Field/ Dealer Reports	C Crash, Injury, Fatality Reports	D Property Damage	E Third-Party Arbitration	F Lawsuits
Odyssey	2005	39	23	11	0	0	1
	2006	10	3	4	0	0	0
	2007	2	2	1	0	0	0

Source(s): Customer Relations, Tech Line, Field Reports, Claims and Lawsuits.  
 As of: Nov. 14, 2008

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:
- Honda's file number or other identifier used;
  - The category of the item, as identified in Request No. 2 (i.e., consumer complaint, field report, etc.);
  - Vehicle owner or fleet name (and fleet contact person), address, and telephone number;
  - 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."

Response: Submitted on Nov. 21, 2008 in response to EA08-015

The data elements "a" through "l" are filed on the enclosed CD.

Source(s): Customer Relations, Tech Line, Field Reports, Claims and Lawsuits.  
As of: Nov. 14, 2008

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 Honda used for organizing the documents.

Response: Submitted on Nov. 21, 2008 in response to EA08-015

See Attachment #Q4

The documents are organized by category and within each category by model year then the last six digits of the VIN, except for field reports which are organized by the last six digits of the VIN.

There were no additional field reports issued since our response to PE08-026, therefore we are submitting the same field reports that were printed on June 20, 2008.

Source(s): Customer Relations, Tech Line, Field Reports, Claims and Lawsuits.  
As of: 2/28/06

5. State, by model and model year, a total count for all of the following categories of claims, collectively, that have been paid by Honda 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. Honda'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;
- h. Problem code;
- i. Replacement part number(s) and description(s);
- j. Concern stated by customer; and
- k. Comment, if any, by dealer/technician relating to claims and/or repair.

Provide this information in Microsoft Access 2000, or a compatible format, entitled "WARRANTY DATA."

Response: Submitted on Nov. 21, 2008 in response to EA08-015

The data elements "a" through "k" are filed on the enclosed CD.

Model	Model Year	Warranty Claims	Goodwill Claims	Extended Warranty	Vehicle Service Contract
Odyssey	2005	2376	257	0	0
	2006	383	10	0	0
	2007	310	5	0	0

Source(s): Warranty claim data.  
As of: Oct. 7, 2008

6. Describe in detail the search criteria used by Honda 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 Honda 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 Honda 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.

Response: Submitted on Nov. 21, 2008 in response to EA08-015

Search Criteria: Using 2005-2007 Odyssey warranty data, claims were pulled based on the tailgate strut part number. The contention text description was reviewed for each claim to identify failure of the tailgate struts to hold the tailgate in the open position or other failure or malfunction of the tailgate strut(s) or parts therein; closing of the tailgate without operator initiation, and failure of the tailgate to remain open.

Coding and Descriptions: See Attachment #Q6

Warranty Coverage: The 2005-2007 Odyssey is covered by a new vehicle limited warranty for three years or 36,000 miles, whichever comes first. Under the terms of the new vehicle limited warranty, Honda will repair or replace any part that is defective in material or workmanship under normal use. This warranty covers all systems except emission control systems, accessories, battery or tires, which have their own warranties. The powertrain warranty covers 2006-2007 Odyssey vehicles. Honda has not issued extended warranty coverage related to the alleged defect in the 2005-2007 Odyssey.

Source(s): Warranty Claim Data  
As of: Nov. 14, 2008

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 Honda 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 Honda is planning to issue within the next 120 days.

Response:            *Submitted on Nov. 21, 2008 in response to EA08-015*

Honda has not issued any service information related to the alleged defect

Currently no communication is planned within the next 120 days.

Source(s): Publications  
As of: Nov. 19, 2008

8. Describe all assessments, analyses, tests, test results, studies, surveys, simulations, investigations, inquiries and/or evaluation (collectively, "action") 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, Honda. This includes but is not limited to any and all actions by the subject component manufacturer relating to the alleged defect. 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. If an action is not complete, provide a detailed schedule for the work to be done, tentative findings and/or conclusions, and provide an update within 10 days of completion of the action.

Response:            *We have included our response submitted on Aug. 4, 2008 along with one additional analysis QIS SHJA-071012-01 (Refer to Attachment #Q8 on enclosed CD)*

Please see the files listed below, each of which has been included in Attachment Q8 on enclosed CD. These documents include our in-house identification of concerns related to model year 2005 through 2007 Honda Odyssey power tailgate strut failures and all actions taken to reduce the failure rate taken by the supplier for these components, Stabilus. Please note that Honda contends that the premature wear of these gas struts does not pose a risk to motor vehicle safety, as we have previously explained. (*Submitted on Aug. 4, 2008 in response to PE08-026*)

**Action #1**

**HMA QIS-SHJA05011002 – [Requested Confidentiality] (Submitted on Aug. 4, 2008 in response to PE08-026)**

- (a) Title: Tailgate Open Stays – Does not hold tailgate open.
- (b) Planned start date of 2005/12/13 – “Theme Up Date”
- (c) Expected end date of 2006/04/10 – “Finish Date”
- (d) A “spike” in the defect rate had been identified occurring around September/October 2004 production of the 2005 model year Odyssey. Burrs identified in the gas strut shafts resulting in scratches to the seal, leading to strut failure.
- (e) Honda of America Manufacturing Market Quality group issued the referenced Quality Improvement Sheet
- (f) The root cause was identified as a sharp edge on the shaft guide due to insufficient deburring by the supplier. A temporary countermeasure of increasing the deburring time from 6 minutes to 18 minutes was planned, with a permanent countermeasure to change the shaft design to include a radius at the rod guide to eliminate the sharp edge. Parts had not been received for analysis at the time of the document being issued.

**HMA QIS-SHJA07040601 – [Requested Confidentiality] (Submitted on Aug. 4, 2008 in response to PE08-026)**

- (a) Title: Tailgate Will Not Stay Open, Strut Failure
- (b) Planned start date of 2005/01/10 – “Theme Up Date”
- (c) Expected end date of 2005/06/17 – “Finish Date”
- (d) A higher than anticipated defect rate for gas tailgate struts. An accumulation of dirt and debris accumulating at the outside of the seal in combination with side loading forces was believed to have caused the tailgate strut seals to leak, causing the struts to fail to hold gas pressure and eventually fail.
- (e) Honda of America Manufacturing Market Quality Group issued the referenced Quality Improvement Sheet
- (f) The root cause was identified as an accumulation of dirt and debris in combination with side loading forces on the gas tailgate struts causing the seals to be compromised, leading to eventual failure of the gas struts. Failure of the struts will cause the liftgate to fail if not addressed.

**HMA QIS-SKVA50121303 – [Requested Confidentiality] (Submitted on Aug. 4, 2008 in response to PE08-026)**

- (a) Title: Tailgate Open Stay Failure – After Deburring Countermeasure
- (b) Planned start date of 2007/04/06 – “Theme Up Date”
- (c) Expected end date of 2007/05/16 – “Finish Date”
- (d) Power tailgate gas strut failure rates noted to be higher than manual tailgates after deburring countermeasure (QIS SHJA05011002). Supplier (Stabilus) analyzed the parts and found contamination in the seal area that appeared to have originated from the assembly process.
- (e) Honda of America Manufacturing Market Quality Group issued the referenced Quality Improvement Sheet
- (f) Changes in the production line at Stabilus were to be implemented to prevent contaminants from entering the parts storage bins prior to strut assembly. The weld process was also modified, including addition of visual and measurement-based inspections to ensure weld accuracy.

Additional Response: (Submitted on Aug. 8, 2008 in response to PE08-026)

050217 Stabilus Report 1 from US  
050614 Meeting Memo  
050614 Stabilus Report 2 from Germany  
050622 Meeting memo  
050622 Stabilus Report 3 from Germany  
050624 Stabilus Report 4 from Germany  
050628 Meeting memo  
050713 Meeting memo  
050722 Stabilus Report 5 from Germany  
050723 Stabilus Report 6 from Germany  
051222 Stabilus Report 7 from Germany  
060106 Stabilus Report 8 from Germany  
060113 Stabilus Report 9 from Germany  
080710 Stabilus Report 10 from US

Pending request for  
confidentiality

HMA QIS-SHJA071012-01 – [Requesting Confidentiality] Refer to Attachment #Q8 on enclosed CD.

- (a) Title: Odyssey Tailgate Open Stay Failure
- (b) Planned start date of 2007/10/12 – “Theme Up Date”
- (c) Expected end date of 2008/10/09 – “Finish Date”
- (d) The power tailgate will not stay open, dealer technicians replace the tailgate stay (struts) to remedy. This document notes that previous countermeasures do not appear to be effective. Failure modes of returned parts are summarized by mode and quantity, defects are described and countermeasures are proposed.
- (e) Honda of America Manufacturing Market Quality Group issued the referenced Quality Improvement Sheet
- (f) This document concludes that previous countermeasures do not seem to be reducing the occurrence of claims. This document requests that analysis be conducted with the supplier to investigate strut failures.

9. Describe all modifications or changes made by or on behalf of Honda (e.g., by a supplier) in the design, material composition, manufacture, quality control, supply, or installation of the subject component, from the start of production of the subject component for the MY2005 and/or later subject vehicles to the date of this letter. 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 of change;
  - c. The reason(s) for the modification or change;
  - d. The part number(s) (service and engineering) of the original component;
  - e. The part number(s) (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 Honda is aware of which may be incorporated into vehicle production within the next 120 days.

**Response:** *There have been no new modifications since our response submitted on Aug. 4, 2008 in response to PE08-026, but we have included the response submitted on that date for your reference.*

**Action #1: Initial production start prior to any countermeasures: Mass Production Spec. Notice: 05M US Odyssey: DWG Issue of T/Gate Equipment (Submitted on Aug. 4, 2008 in response to PE08-026)**

- (a) July 2004
- (b) No change – original design prior to start of mass production.
- (c) No related change – original design
- (d) Part No. 74820-SHJ-A611
- (e) N/A
- (f) This entry refers to the original component
- (g) This original component was made available as a service component form the initial start of retails sales of the 2005 model year Honda Odyssey
- (h) The entry refers to the original component
- (i) As follows:
  - (i) The lifting capacity is designated as  $865N \pm 15N$  (194.5 pound-force  $\pm$  3.4 pound-force)
  - (ii) The design target and durability test routine included 20,000 cycles with no failure or deterioration in marketability
  - (iii) The design target of 20,000 cycles is expected to exceed customer usage
  - (iv) No initial targets were set or forecasts made for failure rates. Failure is monitored in the market and evaluated based on occurrences observed.
  - (v) No targets were set for diminished capacity or performance, outside of the initial performance band of  $865N \pm 15N$  (194.6 pound-force  $\pm$  3.4 pound-force)
  - (vi) The struts as installed at the factory are intended to perform as designed. As failures occur they are recorded and monitored. Because the failure of a power tailgate gas strut poses a customer satisfaction issue as opposed to a safety concern, the claims are evaluated accordingly.

**Action #2: Manufacturing Instruction XD520281: Apply Dust Seal to Open Stay to Improve Toughness (Submitted on Aug. 4, 2008 in response to PE08-026)**

- (a) MI XD520281 was implemented on June 14, 2005
- (b) A dust seal cover was applied at above the gas strut seal to the shaft to help prevent debris from entering the seal and potentially resulting in damage to the seal.
- (c) The modification was implemented as a three month trial to evaluate its effectiveness to prevent debris from gathering directly on the seal where it was believed the shaft could force debris into the seal and cause it to fail. A failed seal would release the gas and result in strut failure.
- (d) The original part no. was 74820-SHJ-A612
- (e) The part number of the modified component was 74820-SHJ-A612-12C
- (f) As this design change was initially implemented as a three-month trial evaluation, the original part number was no longer used at the factory, but was not removed from commerce as a service part.
- (g) The modified component was made available as a service simultaneously or shortly after its application in production on June 14, 2005
- (h) The modified component is interchangeable with earlier production components
- (i) As follows:



- (i) The lifting capacity is designated as  $865N \pm 15N$  (194.5 pound-force  $\pm$  3.4 pound-force)
- (ii) The design target and durability test routine included 20,000 cycles with no failure or deterioration in marketability
- (iii) The design target of 20,000 cycles is expected to exceed customer usage
- (iv) No initial targets were set or forecasts made for failure rates. Failure is monitored in the market and evaluated based on occurrences observed.
- (v) No targets were set for diminished capacity or performance, outside of the initial performance band of  $865N \pm 15N$  (194.6 pound-force  $\pm$  3.4 pound-force)
- (vi) The struts as installed at the factory are intended to perform as designed. As failures occur they are recorded and monitored. Because the failure of a power tailgate gas strut poses a customer satisfaction issue as opposed to a safety concern, the claims are evaluated accordingly.

**Action #3: Manufacturing Instruction XD521060: Remove Dust Covers from SHJ Tailgate Open Stays (Submitted on Aug. 4, 2008 in response to PE08-026)**

- (a) MI XD521060 was implemented on May 22, 2006
- (b) This manufacturing instruction rescinds MI XD520281 as it was found to be ineffective at reducing the failure rate of gas struts for the power tailgate.
- (c) The modification of XD520281 had been implemented as a three month trial to evaluate its effectiveness to prevent debris from gathering directly on the seal where it was believed the shaft could force debris into the seal and cause it to fail. After 11 months of implementation it was found to be ineffective.
- (d) The original part no. was 74820-SHJ-A612, the first modification was designated as part no. 74820-SHJ-A612-12C
- (e) The part number of the modified component was returned to 74820-SHJ-A612
- (f) As this design change was initially implemented as a three-month trial evaluation, the original part number was no longer used at the factory, but was not removed from commerce as a service part.
- (g) The modified component was made available as a service simultaneously or shortly after its application in production on June 14, 2005
- (h) The modified component is interchangeable with earlier production components
- (i) As follows:
  - (i) The lifting capacity is designated as  $865N \pm 15N$  (194.5 pound-force  $\pm$  3.4 pound-force)
  - (ii) The design target and durability test routine included 20,000 cycles with no failure or deterioration in marketability
  - (iii) The design target of 20,000 cycles is expected to exceed customer usage
  - (iv) No initial targets were set or forecasts made for failure rates. Failure is monitored in the market and evaluated based on occurrences observed.
  - (v) No targets were set for diminished capacity or performance, outside of the initial performance band of  $865N \pm 15N$  (194.6 pound-force  $\pm$  3.4 pound-force)
  - (vi) The struts as installed at the factory are intended to perform as designed. As failures occur they are recorded and monitored. Because the failure of a power tailgate gas strut poses a customer satisfaction issue as opposed to a safety concern, the claims are evaluated accordingly.

**Action #4: Mass Production Spec. Notice: 08M US Odyssey: Changing T/Gate O/Stay  
(Submitted on Aug. 4, 2008 in response to PE08-026)**

- (a) Mass Production Spec. Notice and the issuance of a new drawing occurred on September 7, 2007 with an effective implementation date on the manufacturing line of October 2007
- (b) The reactive force of the power tailgate open stay was reduced from 865N±15N (194.6 pound-force ± 3.4 pound-force) to a new value of 825N±15N (185.5 pound-force ± 3.4 pound-force)
- (c) The reactive force reduction of the gas struts was made to improve durability and reliability by reducing the forces required of the struts.
- (d) The original part no. was 74820-SHJ-A612, superceded by 74820-SHJ-A612-12C, superceded by 74820-SHJ-A612
- (e) The part number of the modified component was 74820-SHJ-A710
- (f) The original part was not withdrawn from commerce as this action was undertaken to improve market quality.
- (g) The modified component was introduced as a service part simultaneously or slightly later than the application of this part to mass production assembly.
- (h) The modified component is interchangeable with earlier production components
- (i) As follows:
  - (i) The lifting capacity is designated as 825N ± 15N (185.5 pound-force ± 3.4 pound-force)
  - (ii) The design target and durability test routine included 20,000 cycles with no failure or deterioration in marketability
  - (iii) The design target of 20,000 cycles is expected to exceed customer usage
  - (iv) No initial targets were set or forecasts made for failure rates. Failure is monitored in the market and evaluated based on occurrences observed.
  - (v) No targets were set for diminished capacity or performance, outside of the new performance band of 825N±15N (185.6 pound-force ± 3.4 pound-force)
  - (vi) The struts as installed at the factory are intended to perform as designed. As failures occur they are recorded and monitored. Because the failure of a power tailgate gas strut poses a customer satisfaction issue as opposed to a safety concern, the claims are evaluated accordingly.

**Response: (Submitted on Aug. 4, 2008 in response to PE08-026)**

All documents related to changes to the design, durability and performance of the struts in question are listed below. Copies of the documents are include in this response as Attachment Q13 on attached CD.

**Tailgate Open Stay DC History (following as attachment Q13)**

DC Notice A612 English  
DC Notice A612 Japanese  
DC Notice A710 English  
DC Notice A710 Japanese  
Drawing 74820-SHJ-A710-M1  
XD520281  
XD521060

Requesting  
Confidentiality for  
these documents

10. Describe the modifications that relate to the increase in deburring time for the strut rod guide and the addition of a radius at the rod guide, which are referred to, but not described in any detail, in Honda's response dated August 4, 2008, to the ODI's information request letter dated April 30, 2008. For each of these modifications, provide the following information:
- The date or approximate date on which the modification or change was incorporated into vehicle production;
  - A detailed description of the modification or change;
  - The reason(s) for the modification or change;
  - The part number(s) (engineering and service) of the original component;
  - The part number(s) (engineering and service) of the modified component;
  - Whether the original unmodified component was withdrawn from production and/or sale, and if so, when;
  - When the modified component was made available as a service component; and
  - Whether the modified component can be interchanged with earlier production components.

Response:            *Refer to Attachment #Q10 on enclosed CD*

Each modification is listed in terms of the time and purpose of the countermeasure by part number.

- The attachment notes the date for each change by part number.
  - Each design modification, change and countermeasure relating to this response is specified in attachment #Q10.
  - The reason and expected result of each modification or change is detailed in the attached document.
  - The original part number, 74820-SHJ-A612-M1, is noted in the attachment. The engineering part and service part numbers were the same.
  - The modifications noted in the attachment are listed by part number. The engineering part and service part numbers for the modified components were and are the same for each change.
  - Information relating to the disposition of parts prior to change points was noted in our response to the original inquiry on this subject. Please refer to the earlier response.
  - The information regarding availability of modified parts as service components was provided in our earlier response to the original inquiry.
  - All modified components may be interchanged with earlier production components and vehicles, provided each strut assembly is treated as a single complete component.
11. Explain why the stroke durability requirement (i.e., the number of extend/compress cycles) for the subject component shown in Drawing No. 74820-SHJ-A611-M1 is different than the number of design usage cycles stated in Honda's response dated August 4, 2008, to the ODI's information request letter dated April 30, 2008.

Response:            *Refer to Attachment #Q11 on enclosed CD*

12. Describe in detail the operation of the liftgate system in the subject vehicles when equipped with struts that cannot support the liftgate in the open position. In your description, discuss how the system operates for different lifting forces provided by the struts (e.g., 20, 35, 50, and 75 percent of the full lifting force provided by a pair of new struts) and include nominal closing speed threshold (including

tolerances) required to activate the power-close feature. Your response should include, but is not limited to a discussion of the operation of the liftgate system when the liftgate is closing at speeds below the nominal closing speed threshold required to activate the power-close feature.

Response:            *Refer to Attachment #Q12 and Odyssey video on enclosed CD*

Due to the nature of the gas struts used in this application, we are unable to control the failure to a specific tolerance as requested by NHTSA (e.g., 20, 35, 50 and 75 percent of the full lifting force of a new pair of struts). Therefore, we have simulated the reduced lifting force of the struts by calculating the force of the struts at various reduced temperatures, based on the proper operation of fully charged struts at normal operating temperature of about 20°C. The results of those calculations are shown below.

Attachment #Q12 Odyssey video is a video of the tailgate falling at a closing speed that is too low to be detected by sensing rotation for the drive motor shaft.

13. Describe the specifications of the jam protection sensor that senses the speed of the power liftgate motor and reverses the motor operation when it senses a change in motor speed. Describe the motor mechanism and how it detects a change in motor speed and what change of speed is required to activate the sensor. Also, furnish the nominal force (including its tolerances) required to reverse the motor operation by the pinch protection sensor.

Response:    Refer to Attachment #Q13 on enclosed CD for a detailed response to this question, including illustrations and a table showing the nominal forces and relative speeds of the tailgate.

The Honda Odyssey power tailgate system calculates the drive motor speed by computing pulse cycles resulting from rotation of the drive shaft. Pinch protection is achieved by use of two indirect methods and one direct sensing method. The indirect methods include calculating the motor speed by counting the pulses of the ring magnet mounted to the drive shaft with pulse sensors, then calculating the drive shaft speed by dividing the number of pulses from the time period. The second indirect method relies on monitoring the electrical current draw from the power tailgate drive motor and using the load trend to calculate motor force and the presence of an obstruction. The direct detection method consists of a pinch sensor strip mounted to the lower edge of the tailgate door. Inputs from the indirect methods are monitored by an ECU that judges when an obstruction is present in the path of the power tailgate.

14. Describe all test procedures and test results that relate to liftgate closing speed and force measurements on the subject vehicles when equipped with struts that cannot support the liftgate in the open position.

Response:

Please refer to our responses to questions #16 and 17 of our August 4, 2008 response where design specifications and test procedures related to the performance of the Honda Odyssey power tailgate were outlined in detail. Our response was included on the CD submitted on Aug. 4, 2008 as Attachment #Q9.

As a matter of routine quality control at Honda Manufacturing of Alabama, Inc. conducts the testing outlined in Attachment #Q14 on enclosed CD.

15. Produce copies of all documents that relate to your response to Request Nos. 12, 13, and /or 14.

Response: Refer to Attachments #Q12, #Q13 and #Q14

16. State, by model year, all part numbers of the subject components that have been installed on subject vehicles as assembled by Honda. State, by model year, the service part numbers of the subject components Honda designates for installation on subject vehicles. State, by month, year, and part number, the total number of subject components sold as service parts by Honda. Identify any kits that Honda has released or developed for use in service repairs to the subject components or assembly.

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

Response: Refer to Attachment #Q16 on enclosed CD

Stabilus (supplier) contact:  
Susan Barker  
Account Manager, Stabilus  
36225 Mount Road  
Sterling Heights, MI 48310

This component is only applied to the Honda Odyssey with power tailgate, model years 2005 and later.

17. Furnish Honda's assessment of the alleged defect in the subject vehicles, including:
- The causal or contributory factor(s);
  - The failure mechanism(s);
  - The failure mode(s);
  - The failure consequence(s); i.e., the operation of the liftgate system in the subject vehicles when equipped with struts that cannot support the liftgate in the open position;
  - The risk to motor vehicle safety that it poses; and
  - 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 malfunction.

Response:

The responses to a, b, c, e and f are the same responses submitted on August 4, 2008 for PE08-026. Question #17d was previously not asked in PE08-026, therefore we are submitting our response below.

- a. The conditions specified by NHTSA could occur as a result of failure of one or both of the gas struts. The strut failures typically occur gradually, providing the user with advance notice that the operating characteristics of the power tailgate have changed over time. The changes would be exhibited by the power tailgate closing under power, along with a continuous warning tone to alert the user to the strut failure.
- b. See our response to question #10 for a detailed description of the failure mechanism.
- c. The failure mode of the Odyssey power tailgate is described in the presentation and videos provided on June 26, 2008.
- d. in the event that the performance of one strut degrades to the point of total failure, which typically occurs over an extended period of time, or if both struts failed, the power tailgate would open to the fully open position at the command of the user, then slowly drop to a lower position. When the lower position is detected by the position sensor, the power tailgate would be commanded to re-open to the fully open position. If the tailgate slowly dropped to a lower position twice more fails the consequence the power tailgate ECU would command that a power close operation be initiated. This would occur with audible warnings to alert the user to the possibly unexpected movement of the power tailgate, as previously described and demonstrated.
- e. We do not believe that a defect exists that poses a risk to motor vehicle safety. In the event that one or both power tailgate struts fail, the operation of the power tailgate is designed to change in a dramatic and obvious way. As the power liftgate would alert the user to the change, and the tailgate is designed to close under power with the aid of resistance sensing we believe that no risk to motor vehicle safety is present.
- f. Please see the presentation and video files that were provided to NHTSA on June 26, 2008 and subsequent videos sent to NHTSA on July 31, 2008 for a complete description of the indications provided to the user that the power tailgate struts have failed.

**18. Furnish copies of all communications sent from and received by Honda that relate to or may relate to the alleged defect (including the performance and durability of the subject component), including but not limited to such communications between Honda and the subject component manufacturer and between employees and/or entities within Honda (e.g., any such communication between American Honda Motor Company, Inc. and a subsidiary).**

Response: *Copies of these documents are included in Attachment Q8, 10, 13, 14.*

Sincerely,

AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO., INC.



William R. Willen  
Managing Counsel  
Product Regulatory Office

WRW:nis

Attachments

**HONDA**

**American Honda Motor Co., Inc.**  
1919 Torrance Boulevard  
Torrance, CA 90501-2746  
Phone (310) 783-2000

December 5, 2008

Office of the Chief Counsel  
U.S. DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
National Highway Traffic Safety  
Administration  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**Re: EA08-015 (2005-07 Honda Odyssey Power Tailgate)  
Request for Confidentiality**

Dear Chief Counsel:

Enclosed herewith is a Request for Confidentiality submitted for your review and consideration.

Specifically, we are requesting confidentiality for the following documents in our response to Question #8 (entire), #Q10 (p.2-3), #Q11, #Q12, #Q13 (p.7) and #Q14 (1, 3-5) attachments are proprietary data containing information regarding internal assessments and analyses, design and performance specifications, modification changes, associate names, VINS, engine numbers and transmission numbers. As such, the disclosure of this information would result in significant competitive damage to American Honda Motor Co., Inc. Therefore, we are requesting confidential treatment in accordance with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4).

If you need any additional information regarding this matter, please let me know. We appreciate your consideration and look forward to your decision.

Very truly yours,

AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO., INC.



William R. Willen  
Managing Counsel  
Product Regulatory Office

WRW:nis

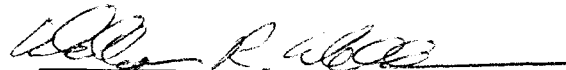
Enclosure

cc: K. Demeter

**AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF REQUEST  
OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

I, William R. Willen being duly sworn, depose and say:

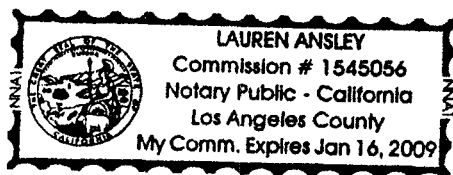
- 1) That I am Managing Counsel of the Product Regulatory Office of the American Honda Motor Co., Inc., and that I am authorized by American Honda Motor Co., Inc., and Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (Honda), to make the following representations to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration on behalf of Honda;
- 2) That information regarding Honda's development documents relating to the 2005-73 Honda Odyssey Power Tailgate, as described in the attached submission is confidential and proprietary data and is being submitted with the claim that it is entitled to confidential treatment under 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4) (as incorporated by reference in and modified by S505(d)(1) of Title 5 of the Motor Vehicle Information and Cost Savings Act). Honda is informed and believes that the disclosure of this information would result in significant competitive damage to the company;
- 3) That I have personally inquired of the responsible Honda employees who have authority in the normal course of business to release the information for which a claim of confidentiality has been made to ascertain whether such information has ever been released outside Honda;
- 4) That based upon the responses to such inquiries, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information for which Honda has claimed confidential treatment has not been, and is not intended to be, released by Honda, to any person, organization or government agency or body outside Honda, its subsidiaries, affiliates, or contracted vendors;
- 5) Based on information and belief, none of the information in the attached materials has been released outside of the governmental entities to which they were supplied;
- 6) That I make no representations beyond those contained in this affidavit and in particular I make no representations as to whether this information may have become available outside of Honda and its subsidiaries, because of unauthorized or inadvertent disclosure except as stated in Paragraph 5;
- 7) That the information contained in the enumerated paragraphs of this affidavit is true and accurate to the best of my information, knowledge and belief.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
William R. Willen

State of California

County of Los Angeles } ss

Subscribed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me on 12th day of December, 2008 by William R. Willen, proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence to be the person(s) who appeared before me.



  
\_\_\_\_\_  
NOTARY PUBLIC