U.S. Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

ODI RESUME

OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

NHTSA

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Investigation: EQ 10-001
Prompted by: 08E-046
Date Opened: 01/25/2010 **Date Closed:** 11/08/2010
Investigator: Alexander Ansley
Approver: Jennifer Timian
Subject: Ricon 6-Way Power Seat Base

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: RICON CORPORATION
Products: R1209/L/E POWER SEAT BASES SOLD BETWEEN 1/1/06 - 5/14/07
Population: 1,034

Problem Description: CERTAIN POWER SEAT BASES MAY HAVE A POOR WELD THAT CAN CAUSE THE DRIVER'S SEAT TO DETACH FROM THE SEAT BASE.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	0	0	0
Crashes/Fires:	0	0	0
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: Close EQ

Summary:

On July 30, 2008, Ricon reported that certain 6-way power seat bases, produced between January 1, 2006 and May 14, 2007, contain a weld on the pivot shaft that may fail due to poor (cold) welding. A failed pivot shaft weld can cause the driver's seat to become detached from the seat base, possibly causing injury to the driver and increasing the risk of a crash. NHTSA assigned recall number 08E-046 to this matter.

On February 5, 2010, the Recall Management Department (RMD) requested Ricon provide its customer list of all recipients that purchased the defective seat bases. Ricon did not respond. After several e-mail exchanges and a second IR letter mailed on April 2, 2010, Ricon responded with its customer list on April 9, 2010. RMD mailed IR letters to the 10 companies on Ricon's list. Those being: Siebert Mobility, Hoglund Bus Co., Inc., Ilderton Conversion Co, New England Wheels Inc, Northern Bus Sales, Inc., Sunset Vans, Inc., The Mobility Specialist, Thomas Bus Sales of IA, Vantage Mobility International, Malley Industries Inc.

Only The Mobility Specialist filed a subsequent Defect Report with NHTSA for new vehicles it modified with these seat bases. It was assigned recall number 10V-270.

RMD received responses from nine of the above companies. Eight of those companies were not required to file a Defect Report for their units for the following reasons: Hoglund Bus Co and Northern Bus Sales, Inc. sold their units over the counter and did not install the units. Siebert Mobility purchased only the assets from the former Arkansas Convention Center and Siebert was not provided any sales records for customer contact. Ilderton Conversion Co and Thomas Bus Sales of IA did not actually perform their installations but contracted them out to other companies. New England Wheels only installed their units on used vehicles. Malley Industries Inc. installed their unit on a Canadian vehicle.

Vantage Mobility International (VMI) is a distributor that re-sold their units to 250 dealers. VMI did not file a Defect Report, as distributors are not required by regulation to do so, but did provide copies of the letters mailed to its dealer

body. VMI's letters included verbiage about subsequent reporting responsibilities the dealers might have if they altered new vehicles and also included a template Defect Report for their convenience. Only three of VMI's dealers filed subsequent Defect Reports with NHTSA. They were: Arizona Mobility (10V-261), All in One Mobility (10V-271), Driving Specialties (10V-338).

Only Sunset Vans, Inc. did not respond to RMD's April 20, 2010 IR letter. Another IR letter was sent to Sunset Vans on May 26, 2010. Phone calls and e-mail exchanges with Sunset Vans on September 1, 2010 did not motivate a response submission. A third IR letter was mailed on October 1, 2010. No response was received. Sunset Vans, Inc.'s lack of a response to RMD's recall inquiry will be forwarded to NHTSA's Office of the Chief Counsel for further enforcement consideration and action.

This EQ is closed.