U.S. Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

ODI RESUME

OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

NHTSA

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Investigation: EQ 12-008
Prompted by: 12E-017
Date Opened: 06/27/2012 **Date Closed:** 09/28/2012
Investigator: Alexander Ansley
Approver: Jennifer Timian
Subject: SMI Bus Roof Escape Hatches / FMVSS 217

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: SPECIALTY MANUFACTURING CO.
Products: ProLo Roof Hatch produced 5/21/11 - 3/25/12
Population: 15,462

Problem Description: Certain school bus and transit bus escape hatches require too much force to open and, as a result, do not meet FMVSS 217.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: Close EQ

Summary:

In a letter dated April 18, 2012, Specialty Manufacturing, Inc. (SMI) notified the NHTSA that certain ProLo bus roof escape hatches, installed as original equipment on various school buses and transit buses, may fail to conform to Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS). These hatches, shipped between April 1, 2011, and March 25, 2012, experience increased friction between the rear plate assemblies and the nylon rear pop-up support, resulting in an opening force that exceeds FMVSS No. 217, "Bus Emergency Exits and Window Retention and Release." In the event of an emergency, a noncompliant hatch may not provide a means of readily accessible egress, increasing the risk of injury to the vehicle occupants. NHTSA assigned recall number 12E-017 to this matter.

On July 12, 2012, RMD mailed information request (IR) letters to five (5) manufacturers who had not yet conducted safety recalls for this issue. Collins Bus responded that they did not incorporate these escape hatches into any new buses but instead sold them to dealerships. Collins noted that they would notify the dealers of SMI's recall. The other four (4) manufacturers filed Part 573 Reports and conducted safety recalls for their affected vehicles. The following recalls were filed as a result of this EQ:

Turtle Top: 12V-330
Elkhart Coach: 12V-348
Girardin Minibus, Inc: 12V-362
Glaval Bus: 12V-384

As RMD received adequate responses from all the companies it contacted, this Equipment Query is closed.