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 |
| **Investigator:** | Alexander Ansley |
| **Approver:** | Jennifer Timian |
| **Subject:** | SMI Bus Roof Escape Hatches / FMVSS 217 |

## MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

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| **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:** Open 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.

SMI supplied a list of purchasers who potentially installed these roof hatches as original equipment in their vehicles. Eight of the thirteen vehicle manufacturers SMI listed have not yet conducted safety recalls for this issue.

The purpose of this EQ is to write to any other companies that might have purchased these roof hatches, notify them of this noncompliance in any vehicles they manufactured, and to ensure thorough safety recalls are conducted where appropriate.