U.S. Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

ODI RESUME

OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION
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Investigation: EQ 13-003
Prompted by: 13E-001
Date Opened: 06/13/2013 **Date Closed:** 05/20/2014
Investigator: Cynthia Glass
Approver: Jennifer Timian
Subject: Wheelchair Lift Cable May Short Circuit

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: Ricon Corporation
Products: S-Series and K-Series Wheelchair Lifts
Population: 4,075

Problem Description: S-Series and K-Series wheelchair lifts equipped with an optional armored pendant cable may have been installed such that it doesn't clear the wheelchair lift and may cause a short circuit resulting in a fire.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: This Equipment Query is Closed.

Summary:

The closing resume summary is attached.

EQ 13-003: Ricon Wheelchair Lift Cable May Short Circuit (13E-001/12E-038)

Closing Resume Summary

May 20, 2014

BACKGROUND

In a letter dated October 23, 2012, Ricon Corporation (Ricon) notified the NHTSA that it decided a defect exists in certain model S-Series and K-Series wheelchair lifts manufactured between August 1, 2006 and January 4, 2014, and equipped with an optional armored pendant cable. The cable may have been installed such that it doesn't clear the wheelchair lift. In addition, the cable may have been installed without a protective cover or an improperly installed protective cover. As a result, the cable may contact the power lug at the base of the wheelchair lift causing a short circuit that could result in a fire. Ricon identified the number of units affected to be 3,780 and provided a purchaser list identifying 24 purchasers including vehicle manufacturers and other original equipment manufacturers. This matter was assigned recall number 12E-038.

On January 11, 2013, Ricon notified the NHTSA that the potential number of units affected in recall 12E-038 increased. This matter was assigned recall number 13E-001. Recall 12E-038 was superseded by recall 13E-001. The total population of affected units from both campaigns is 4,075.

Nine (9) vehicle manufacturers filed Part 573 Reports and announced plans to conduct safety recalls for their affected vehicles prior to the opening of this EQ investigation. Those recalls are listed below:

	MANUFACTURER	RECALL #
1	Champion Bus, Inc.	12V-593
2	Coach & Equipment Mfg Corp.	12V-569
3	Eldorado National, Inc.	13V-009
4	Glaval Bus, Inc.	12V-580
5	Goshen Coach, Inc.	13V-008
6	Starcraft Bus	13V-199
7	Supreme Corporation	13V-083
8	Supreme Truck Bodies	13V-067
9	Winnebago Industries	12V-575

On June 13, 2013, the Recall Management Division (RMD) opened this Equipment Query (EQ) Investigation in order to write the companies that purchased these wheelchair lifts, to notify them that this defect may exist in the vehicles or equipment they manufacture for use in vehicles, and to ensure thorough safety recalls are conducted where appropriate. On June 14, 2013, an Information Request (IR) letter was sent to the remaining 15 purchasers Ricon identified, and for which NHTSA had not been notified of a defect decision.

INFORMATION REQUEST RESPONSE

In response to the IR letter, twelve (12) manufacturers filed Part 573 Reports and announced plans to conduct safety recalls for their affected vehicles. Those recalls are listed below:

	MANUFACTURER	RECALL #
1	Ameritrans Bus	13V-296
2	Daimler Buses North America, Inc.	13V-325
3	DDT Mobility, LLC	13V-379
4	Elkhart Coach Division	13V-253
5	Farber Specialty Vehicles	13V-269
6	Forest River, Inc. (a division of Starcraft Bus)	13V-199
7	Mid Bus, Inc. (a division of Collins Bus)	13V-256
8	Mobilityworks, Inc.	13V-261
9	Oshkosh Specialty Vehicles (a division of Pierce Manufacturing)	13V-359
10	TMC Group, Inc.	13V-299
11	Transportation Collaborative, Inc.	13V-294
12	Turtle Top, Inc.	13V-263

One manufacturer, Dodgen Industries, Inc., submitted a response explaining that the purchased lift did not have the armored pendant cable and therefore was incorrectly identified as part of the Ricon recall. Dodgen is not conducting a recall.

Two (2) manufacturers, Accubuilt, Inc. and OBS, Inc., did not submit written responses to RMD's IR letter, even after multiple contact attempts were made by RMD staff. These companies have been referred to NHTSA's Office of the Chief Counsel for further possible enforcement action.

RECALL MANAGEMENT DIVISION ACTION

As RMD was preparing its closing report for the investigation, it discovered that Ricon had not provided the inclusive dates of manufacturing for its defective lifts. Specifically, Ricon provided a beginning date, but not an ending date. RMD contacted Ricon to obtain this information. On January 15, 2014, Ricon emailed RMD a letter stating that their production facility mis-handled an engineering change, and 356 defective units were produced and shipped to customers after the two recall campaigns were issued. A copy of Ricon's letter is included as Exhibit A.

On March 27, 2014, Ricon filed a 573 Report with RMD to recall the 356 wheelchair lifts that were produced and shipped to customers after the two recall campaigns were issued. Ricon's continued manufacturing and distribution of defective products after a safety defect decision has been rendered is a serious matter. Therefore, Ricon has been referred to NHTSA's Office of the Chief Counsel for further possible enforcement action.

All vehicle and original equipment manufacturers have been identified and have either filed recall reports and are conducting recalls, or have provided responses explaining why they are not conducting recalls. Accordingly, this equipment query investigation is closed. Copies of documents associated with this investigation, including responses to IR letters, can be found in this Equipment Query's document repository by clicking the "Associated Documents" button.