U.S. Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

ODI RESUME

OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

NHTSA

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Investigation: EQ 14-004
Prompted by: 13E-061
Date Opened: 04/22/2014 **Date Closed:** 08/25/2014
Investigator: Cynthia Glass
Approver: Jennifer Timian
Subject: Seat Belt May Be Difficult to Unfasten

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: Indiana Mills and Manufacturing Inc.
Products: Seat Belt Assembly
Population: 74,000

Problem Description: In certain seat belt assemblies, when the button is pressed to release the seat belt, the latch plate can become partially engaged with the buckle, and it may take more effort than specified in FMVSS 209 to separate the latch plate from the buckle.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: This EQ investigation is closed

Summary:

The Closing Report is attached.

EQ 14-004: IMMI Seatbelt Assembly May Be Difficult to Unfasten

Closing Resume Summary

August 25, 2014

BACKGROUND

In a letter dated November 19, 2013, Indiana Mills and Manufacturing Inc. (IMMI) notified the NHTSA that it decided a defect exists in certain seat belt assemblies manufactured from August 2, 2013, through October 31, 2013. The seat belt assemblies fail to conform to the requirements of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 209, "Seat Belt Assemblies." When the button is pressed to release the seat belt, the latch plate can become partially engaged with the buckle, and it may take more effort than specified in the standard to separate the latch plate from the buckle. If the latch plate remains partially engaged after the button is pressed, egress from the vehicle could be hindered. This matter was assigned recall number 13E-061.

On April 22, 2014, the Recall Management Division (RMD) opened this Equipment Query (EQ) Investigation in order to write the companies that purchased these seat belt assemblies, to notify them of this defect in any vehicle or vehicle equipment they manufactured, and to ensure thorough safety recalls are conducted where appropriate.

Prior to opening this EQ investigation, eighteen (18) vehicle manufacturers filed a defect report announcing their decision to conduct a safety recall for their affected vehicles. The vehicle recall campaigns are:

Manufacturer	Recall #
Autocar, LLC	14V-133
Blue Bird Body Company	13V-577
Blue Bird Body Company	13V-579
Collins Bus Corporation	13V-590
Dynacraft Division Of PACCAR	14V-013
Emergency One Inc.	13V-601
Fleetwood RV	13V-580
Freightliner Corporation	13V-604
IC Bus	13V-631
Kenworth Division of PACCAR	14V-013
Mack Trucks	13V-618
Paccar Parts	14V-013
Peterbilt Motors	14V-013
Prevost Car, Inc.	13V-618
Seats Inc.	13V-064
Spartan Motors Inc.	13V-613
Thomas Built Buses	13V-606
Volvo Trucks North American	13V-618

In their 573 Defect Notification Report, IMMI provided a customer list consisting of 161 companies who purchased the defective seatbelt assemblies. After reviewing the customer list, removing the companies that filed Part 573 Reports before the investigation was opened, and combining duplicate or affiliate companies, on April 24, 2014, an Information Request (IR) letter was sent to twenty-six (26) purchasers for which NHTSA had not been notified of a defect decision. On June 27, 2014, an IR letter was sent to nine (9) purchasers who did not respond to the April 24, 2014 IR letter.

IMMI OEM RESPONSE

In response to the IR letters, eight (8) vehicle manufacturers filed a defect report and indicated they would conduct a recall of their vehicles. The vehicle recall campaigns are:

Manufacturer	Recall #
Alliance Bus Group, Inc.	14V-423
Autobus Lion, Inc. (Lion Buses)	14V-333
Elgin Sweeper Company, Inc.	14V-250
HME Incorporated	14V-230
Kovatch Mobile Equip Corporation	14V-455
Pierce Manufacturing	14V-243
Seagrave Fire Apparatus, LLC	14V-249
Sutphen Corporation	14V-456

Fourteen (14) manufacturers submitted responses explaining that they are not vehicle manufacturers. Many of these manufacturers are parts distributors and retailers who do not have any obligations to conduct safety recalls. Accordingly, the following manufacturers do not need to make a defect decision or conduct recall campaigns:

Manufacturer
American Midwest Fleet Solutions
Easy Way Safety Services, Inc.
Gramag Truck Interior Systems
Greyhound Lines, Inc.
H O Bostrom Company
Hands Free Company LLC
Hoekstra Transportation, Inc.
International Corporation
Link-Belt Construction Equipment
Matthews Buses, Inc.
Midwest Transit Of Illinois
Sonny Merryman Inc.
Tri State Truck Center, Inc.
United Parcel Service

Three (3) manufacturers submitted a response explaining that the seatbelt assemblies were quarantined in their facility prior to installation. Since the defective seatbelt assemblies were not installed on any vehicles and, were returned to IMMI and remedied prior to installation or sale, the following manufacturers are not conducting a recall campaign:

Manufacturer
Ferrara Fire Apparatus
Leonard Bus Sales, Inc.
Life Line

One manufacturer, American Seating Company, did not submit a written response to RMD's IR letter, even after multiple attempts to contact them were made by RMD staff. American Seating Company will be referred to NHTSA's Office of the Chief Counsel for further possible enforcement action.

RECALL MANAGEMENT DIVISION ACTION

All vehicle and motor vehicle equipment manufacturers who purchased the defective seatbelt assemblies 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.