U.S. Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

ODI RESUME

OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

NHTSA

Authentic US Government Information
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
uses a ***digital certificate*** to ensure
the content has remained unchanged

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

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer:	Indiana Mills and Manufacturing Inc.
Products:	Seat Belt Assembly
Population:	74,000 (Estimated)
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 Equipment Query (EQ) Investigation is Opened.

Summary:

On November 19, 2013, Indiana Mills and Manufacturing Inc. (IMMI) notified the NHTSA that it decided a defect exists in certain seat belt assemblies equipped with L9 end-release seat belt buckles. The L9 buckles are potentially noncompliant with S4.3(g) of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 209, "Seat Belt Assemblies". The suspect L9 buckles were produced at IMMI manufacturing facilities in Westfield, IN between August 2, 2013 and September 13, 2013, and in Saltillo, Mexico between August 8, 2013 and September 13, 2013. Seat belt assemblies, incorporating the suspect L9 buckles, were manufactured between August 2, 2013 and October 25, 2013 at IMMI's Westfield, IN manufacturing facility and between August 8, 2013 and October 31, 2013 at IMMI's Saltillo, Mexico facility.

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.

IMMI has supplied NHTSA with a purchaer list identifying the manufacturers that may have incorporated these seat belt assemblies into their vehicles and seats. However, at this time, a Part 573 Report has not been filed by all of these potentially affected manufacturers.

The purpose of this EQ investigation is to write to the companies that purchased the defective IMMI seat belt assemblies, notify them of this defect, and ensure thorough safety recalls are conducted where appropriate.