



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Memorandum

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

Subject: Test Request: Analysis of Risk of Injuries
From Side Air Bag Deployment Date: August 7, 2014

From: Frank S. Borris II, Director
Office of Defects Investigation Reply to: NVS-212mjl
Attn of: EA14-004

To: Roger Saul, Director
Vehicle Research and Test Center

This memorandum requests the Vehicle Research and Test Center (VRTC) to conduct the testing as described below.

BACKGROUND:

The Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) is conducting an Engineering Analysis (EA14-004) concerning the inadvertent deployment of the side air bags in certain model year 2008 Honda Accord 4-door vehicles (subject vehicles). When the driver or front passenger door is shut, the driver-side or passenger-side side curtain air bag (SCAB) can deploy, and in some cases, the side seat-mounted torso air bag as well. Fourteen people allegedly suffered injuries caused by the deploying air bags.

In June 2008, near the end of the subject vehicle production, Honda changed the crash parameter for door closing force, which is embedded in the electronic control unit's software code, in order to reduce the incidents of the inadvertent side air bag deployments. More specifically, the software design change was made on June 5, 2008 for the Accords built in the U.S. and on June 30, 2008 for those built in Japan.

OBJECTIVES: The two primary objectives of this test program are to evaluate: (a) the risk of air bag deployment injuries to vehicle users in vulnerable positions, and (b) the amount of vehicle door closing force and speed necessary to deploy the side air bags in the subject vehicles. For the first objective, ODI proposes in-vehicle deployment testing using different size crash dummies in different positions. Potential test conditions include a child sitting or standing with the head in direct path of SCAB deployment and a parent putting a small child in a child seat with the parent's head or neck in the path of SCAB deployment. Testing shall include capturing head and neck injury measures and videos of each test.



TEST VEHICLE: VRTC shall obtain a model year 2008 Honda Accord 4-door vehicle built before the software design change in June 2008, as described above. The test vehicle should be in good condition and not have any history of prior accidents or damage.

TEST PROCEDURE/METHODOLOGY: VRTC shall prepare the test procedures and methodology necessary to meet the objectives of this test program.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The project engineer at ODI is Michael Lee who will discuss the details of the testing with your engineers. He can be reached at (202) 366-5236 or michael.lee@dot.gov.

SCHEDULE: We would like to have the testing completed on an expedited basis and determine the schedule/completion date with VRTC.