



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 17-006
Date Opened: 09/25/2017
Investigator: Ryan Rahimpour
Approver: Stephen Ridella
Subject: Seat Belt Latch Failure
Reviewer: Bruce York-B

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: Van Hool N.V.
Products: 2016 Van Hool Buses
Population: 500 (Estimated)
Problem Description: Seat belt latch casing fails resulting in potential latch/buckle failure and unrestrained passenger increasing the risk of injury in a crash.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	0	TBD	TBD
Crashes/Fires:	0	TBD	TBD
Injury Incidents:	0	TBD	TBD
Number of Injuries:	0	TBD	TBD
Fatality Incidents:	0	TBD	TBD
Number of Fatalities:	0	TBD	TBD
Other*:	7	Confidential	Confidential

***Description of Other:** Seat belt latch casing failures identified during bus inspections conducted by NTSB and reports found in EWR data.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: A Preliminary Evaluation (PE) has been opened.

Summary:

Through Early Warning Reporting (EWR) data review of Field Reports for 2016 Q1-Q3, several reports were found that identified failures of seat belt latches on MY 2016 motorcoaches. Further review of EWR aggregate warranty data showed additional claims for MY 2016 buses that had similar latch claims.

While reviewing data related to the latch issue, ODI was contacted by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) regarding seat belt latch issues they discovered while investigating a crash between a train and a 2016 Van Hool bus in Biloxi, Mississippi. Through informal inspections of buses similar to the bus involved in the crash, NTSB found latch casing failures on the seat belt latches manufactured by Fasching Salzburg. These concerns were provided to ODI suggesting the latch casing failures may be a wide spread problem found on MY 2016 buses.

As a result of the concerns provided by the NTSB related to Van Hool, ODI researched Van Hool EWR aggregate data and found no data (field reports, warranty claims, customer complaints) has been submitted. This prompted ODI to question whether Van Hool is fulfilling their reporting obligations as a final stage manufacturer under 49 CFR Part 579.22.

Because ODI has found the majority of the known seat belt latch casing failures occurring on Van Hool buses and that Van Hool has apparently not been submitting EWR data as required by the CFR, ODI is opening a Preliminary Evaluation (PE). Also, this investigation will determine if other bus manufacturers use similar Fasching Salzburg seat

belts and whether their buses have also experienced casing failures.