



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration**

## ODI RESUME

OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

**Investigation:** DP26001  
**Prompted By:** Defect Petition  
**Date Opened:** 03/06/2026  
**Date:** 08/04/2026  
**Closed:**  
**Investigator:** Richard Lawrence  
**Reviewer:** Sharon Yukevich  
**Approver:** Tanya Topka  
**Subject:** All wheel drive allegation

### MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

**Manufacturer:** Honda (American Honda Motor Co.)  
**Products:** 2021-2023 TLX, 2022-2023 MDX  
**Population:** 137,329  
**Problem Description:** Loss of all wheel drive due to interfacing spline failure between transmission and transfer case resulting in only front wheel drive.

### FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

|                              | ODI | Manufacturer | EWR D&I | Other | Total | EWR Field Reports |
|------------------------------|-----|--------------|---------|-------|-------|-------------------|
| <b>All Incidents:</b>        | 62  | 0            | 0       | 0     | 62    | CONF              |
| <b>Crashes/Fires:</b>        | 0   | 0            | 0       | 0     | 0     | 0                 |
| <b>Injury Incidents:</b>     | 0   | 0            | 0       | 0     | 0     | 0                 |
| <b>Number of Injuries:</b>   | 0   | 0            | 0       | 0     | 0     | 0                 |
| <b>Fatality Incidents:</b>   | 0   | 0            | 0       | 0     | 0     | 0                 |
| <b>Number of Fatalities:</b> | 0   | 0            | 0       | 0     | 0     | 0                 |

### ACTION/SUMMARY INFORMATION

**Action:** Petition is denied; close this Defect Petition.

**Summary:**

The Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) has completed its review of a Petition dated January 9, 2026, requesting an investigation into the loss of the optional all-wheel drive capability in model year (MY) 2021-2023 Acura TLX and MY 2022-2023 Acura MDX vehicles. The Petition alleges failures in the interfacing splines between the front wheel drive transaxle and the rear wheel drive power take off unit. Failure of these splines prevents the transfer of drive power to the rear axle, making the vehicle front wheel drive only. The Petition further alleges that this failure reduces vehicle directional control.

Most traditional AWD systems utilize mechanical and passive measures. These systems have the tendency to distribute torque along the path of least resistance, such as a wheel that has lost contact with the ground or is on a low friction surface such as ice. To compensate for this, many manufacturers use the brake system to redirect torque to the wheels with more traction. However, in this style of AWD system, a failed drive shaft or similar disconnection prior to the brakes often results in drive power being lost to the disconnected component. The consequence of this loss is the inability to maintain speed with surrounding traffic which increases the risks of collisions and injuries to the vehicle occupants.

The Subject Vehicles are built upon a platform that was designed primarily as Front Wheel Drive (FWD). The SH-AWD system functions more as a performance enhancement feature rather than a stability feature. Even if the SH-AWD is nonoperational, the vehicles retain full mobility via FWD. In addition, the Vehicle Stability Assist (VSA) remains functional, ensuring directional stability through traditional engine and brake-based traction control. Although the condition raised by the Petitioner may degrade the vehicle's performance characteristics, there is insufficient information to indicate a potential unreasonable safety risk.

ODI reviewed 62 Vehicle Owner Questionnaires (VOQs) and several EWR Field Reports alleging the loss of SH-AWD and its impact on the driving dynamics of the subject vehicles. During its analysis, ODI determined that the failure is localized to the mechanical interface between the FWD transaxle and the PTU. Specifically, the failure is the shearing or stripping of the interfacing splined shafts between the FWD transaxle and the PTU, resulting in a permanent loss of torque transfer to the rear of the vehicle. Upon reviewing the technical details of SH-AWD, ODI has found that this failure does not result in any loss of motive power or lead to a loss of vehicle control.

Several complaints indicated that the operators were unaware of the mechanical fault until encountering a low friction surface or the condition was identified by a technician during routine maintenance. The SH-AWD system lacks any form of direct feedback for monitoring real time torque transfer to the rear wheels. Therefore, the system will continue to display information indicating power is being supplied to the rear wheels even when power is actually only supplied to the front wheels.

ODI's review did not identify sufficient evidence to indicate that the misinformation has presented a safety issue in the field. ODI did not identify any reports of loss of motive power or vehicle control that could be attributed to the loss of SH-AWD. ODI is not aware of any crashes involving the Subject Vehicles that resulted from the loss of SH-AWD.

After thoroughly assessing the material submitted by the Petitioner, consumer complaint information in NHTSA's databases, and other relevant information already in possession of the Agency, NHTSA has not found sufficient evidence to indicate that the loss of AWD as alleged by the Petitioner is likely to present a safety related defect that would warrant a formal investigation. After full consideration of the available information, and in view of NHTSA's enforcement priorities, the Petition is denied. A denial report will be posted in the Federal Register. The closing of the petition does not constitute a finding by NHTSA that a safety related defect does not exist, and the agency reserves the right to take additional action if warranted by future circumstances. The Petition can be viewed at [NHTSA.gov](https://www.nhtsa.gov) under ODI Number 11712885.