

HONDA

AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO., INC.

1919 Torrance Boulevard • Torrance, CA 90501-2746
(310) 783-2000

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OFFICE
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

August 18, 1999

Ms. Kathleen C. DeMeter,
Director
Office of Defects Investigation
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY
ADMINISTRATION
400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, DC 20590

99V-227 (01)

Dear Ms. DeMeter:

On July 28, 1999, Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (HMC) determined that a defect relating to motor vehicle safety exists in the transmission of certain 1996-1999 model Acura 3.5RL and 1996-1998 3.2TL vehicles. The following information is submitted pursuant to the requirements of 49 CFR 573.5.

573.5(c)(1)

Name of manufacturer: Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (HMC)
Manufacturer's Agent: William R. Willen
American Honda Motor Co., Inc.
1919 Torrance Blvd.
Torrance, CA 90501-2746

573.5(c)(2)

Identification of potentially affected vehicles:

<u>Make/Model</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>VIN/Dates of Manufacture</u>
Acura 3.5RL	All 1996 model year	JH4KA964*TC000073 to JH4KA966*TC015248 December 14, 1995 to August 2, 1996
	All 1997 model year	JH4KA966*VC000002 to JH4KA964*VC016377 August 8, 1996 to August 29, 1997
	All 1998 model year	JH4KA964*WC000017 to JH4KA968*WC014182 September 15, 1997 to July 31, 1998
	Certain 1999 model year	JH4KA965*XC000031 to JH4KA965*XC012694 August 24, 1998 to June 29, 1999

573.5(c)(2)

Identification of potentially affected vehicles: (cont.)

<u>Make/Model</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>VIN/Dates of Manufacture</u>
Acura 3.2TL	All 1996 model year	JH4UA365*TC000058 to JH4UA365*TC014540 April 10, 1995 to August 2, 1996
	All 1997 model year	JH4UA364*VC000009 to JH4UA364*VC012850 August 22, 1996 to July 21, 1997
	All 1998 model year	JH4UA364*WC000001 to JH4UA364*WC010910 August 19, 1997 to April 16, 1998

Description of the basis for the determination of the recall population:

Vehicles within the affected VIN range were equipped with secondary driven gears that were redesigned to reduce transmission noise.

The 1999 3.5RL vehicles manufactured after the affected group were equipped with a redesigned bolt, and a groove for the set ring was added to prevent extension shaft disengagement from the differential.

The 1999 3.2TL is not part of this recall because it underwent a full model change that included a redesigned transmission and differential.

573.5(c)(3)

Total number of vehicles potentially affected: 96,617

573.5(c)(4)

Percentage of affected vehicles that contain the defect: 100%

573.5(c)(5)

Defect description:

Summary

A transmission case bolt can loosen and fall out, allowing the transmission to disengage from the differential. If this condition occurs, the vehicle would lose power to the drive wheels without warning. Also, shifting the transmission into the Park position would not lock the wheels, and a parked vehicle could move unexpectedly if the parking brake is not set.

Detail

A large (36 mm) transmission case bolt allows service access to disconnect the differential from the transmission (see attached drawing). A change to the secondary driven gear, to reduce transmission noise, increased the likelihood of contact between the extension shaft (connecting the transmission and differential) and this bolt. The bolt is installed with a thread lock/sealer. In time, the repeated contact of the shaft against the bolt can cause the sealer to lose its effectiveness, and the bolt may loosen and fall out. If the bolt falls out, the extension shaft could disengage from the differential, disconnecting the drive train between the transmission and the differential.

573.5(c)(6)

Chronology:

December 1987	American Honda Motor Co., Inc. (AHM) became aware of transmission failure complaints.
October 29, 1998	AHM issued a technical report.
November 2, 1998	HMC received the technical report and began an investigation.
July 19, 1999	HMC completed the investigation and analysis.
July 28, 1999	HMC determined that a safety-related defect exists.

573.5(c)(8)(i)

Program for remedying the defect:

Dealers will install an updated transmission case bolt, free of charge, in all affected vehicles. The thread lock/sealer previously applied to the bolt will be eliminated. The new bolt will use an o-ring as the seal.

573.5(c)(8)(ii)

The estimated date to begin sending notifications to owners:	August 30, 1999
The estimated date to begin sending notifications to dealers:	August 19, 1999
The estimated date of completion of the notification:	August 30, 1999

573.5(c)(9)

Representative copies of all notices, bulletins and other communications:

A copy of the dealer service bulletin and text of the final customer notification letter will be submitted to your office as soon as possible.

Ms. Kathleen C. DeMeter
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573.5(c)(10)

Proposed owner notification letter submission:

A draft of the owner notification letter was previously submitted.

Sincerely,

AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO., INC.



William R. Willen
Managing Counsel
Product Regulatory Office

WRW:ke

Enclosure

Assembly Drawing

