

May 10, 2002

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OFFICE OF
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

Mr. Kenneth Weinstein,
Associate Administrator
Office of Defects Investigation
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY
ADMINISTRATION
400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, DC 20590

02V-119 ① of ③

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

On April 22, 2002, Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (HMC) determined that a defect relating to motor vehicle safety exists in the brakes switches in the vehicles listed below. 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. (AHM)
1919 Torrance Blvd.
Torrance, CA 90501-2746

573.5(c)(2)

Identification of potentially affected vehicles:

<u>Make/Model</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>VINs/Dates of Manufacture</u>
Acura 3.5RL	Certain 2000 model year Certain 2001 model year Certain 2002 model year	JH4KA9***YC006944 – JH4KA9***YC016470 JH4KA9***1C000001 – JH4KA9***1C003312 JH4KA9***2C000011 – JH4KA9***2C012956 Feb. 14, 2000 to Mar. 7, 2002

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

The brake pedal assemblies of the affected vehicles were manufactured at a Philippine factory. The application of rust preventative oil to newly welded portions of the brake assembly was necessitated by the local climatic conditions and for overseas shipment to Japan. On the affected vehicles, the anti-rust oil was applied to the entire brake pedal assembly—not only to the welded portions but also at the stop switch area.

Brake assemblies manufactured before the affected units were produced in Japan and did not require the rust preventative treatment. For brake assemblies manufactured after the affected units, the process was changed to limit the application of the anti-rust oil to new welds only, and **not** to the stop switch area.

573.5(c)(3)

Total number of vehicles potentially affected: 25,765

573.5(c)(4)

Percentage of affected vehicles that contain the defect: Unknown

573.5(c)(5)

Defect description:

Summary

The brake switch may have been contaminated by an application of rust preventative oil during the manufacturing process. As a result, the brake lamp may not illuminate, even when the brake is applied.

Detail

Rust preventative oil applied to brake pedal assemblies can leak into the brake stop switch and contaminate the electrical contacts. Normal switch operation will cause oil on the electrical contacts to carbonize. Excessive heat caused by the increased electrical resistance at the contacts can deform the plastic switch shaft, causing the switch to become inoperative. As a result, the brake lamp will not illuminate, even when the brakes are applied.

573.5(c)(6)

Chronology:

Sept. 19, 2001	AHM became aware of a brake light failure complaint and issued a technical report.
Sept. 21, 2001	HMC received the technical report and began an investigation.
Oct. 22, 2001	HMC's investigation found that the failed switch was contaminated by a lubricating oil (similar to WD-40) that is not used in production or recommended service procedures. Therefore, HMC closed the investigation but decided to watch the market.
Jan. 18, 2002	AHM requested that HMC study this issue again, and a new investigation initiated.
Apr. 16, 2002	HMC completed the investigation and analysis.
Apr. 22, 2002	HMC determined that a safety-related defect exists.

573.5(c)(8)(i)

Program for remedying the defect:

Dealers will clean any excess oil from the pedal assembly and replace the stop switch in all affected vehicles, free of charge.

573.5(c)(8)(ii)

The estimated date to begin sending notifications to owners: June 10, 2002

The estimated date to begin sending notifications to dealers: May 13, 2002

The estimated date of completion of the notification: June 10, 2002

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.

573.5(c)(10)

Proposed owner notification letter submission:

A draft of the owner notification letter will be submitted to your office as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO., INC.



William R. Willen
Managing Counsel
Product Regulatory Office