

TOYOTA
TOYOTA MOTOR NORTH AMERICA, INC.

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April 7, 2004

04V-181
(5 pages)

Mr. Kenneth N. Weinstein
Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance – NSA-01
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

RECEIVED
APR 15 A 8 28
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

Re: Toyota Highlander Child Protection Lock Problem
Part 573, Defect Information Report

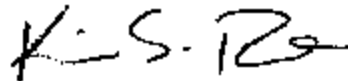
Dear Mr. Weinstein:

In accordance with the requirements of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966 and 49 CFR Part 573, on behalf of Toyota Motor Corporation ["TMC"], we hereby submit the attached Defect Information Report concerning a safety recall of certain 2001 through 2004 model year Toyota Highlander vehicles to address an child protection lock problem.

Should you have any questions about this report, please contact Mr. Sid Yokoi or Mr. Chris Santucci at (202) 463-6856.

Sincerely,

TOYOTA MOTOR NORTH AMERICA, INC.



 Chris Tinto
Director

CT:ty
Attachment

DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT

1. Vehicle Manufacturer Name:

Toyota Motor Corporation ["TMC"]
1, Toyota-cho, Toyota-city,
Aichi-ken, 471-8571 Japan

Affiliated U.S. Sales Company

Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc. ["TMS"]
19001 South Western Avenue
Torrance, CA 90509

2. Identification of Affected Vehicles:

Based on production records, we have determined the affected vehicle population as set forth in the table below.

Make/ Car Line	Model Year	Manufac- turer	VIN		Production Period
			VDS	VIS	
Toyota Highlander	2001 - 2004	TMC	DD21A	40073058 - 40091021	November 17, 2000 through January 29, 2004
			DP21A	40001001 - 40021862	
			ED21A	40026374 - 40029380	
			EP21A	40001008 - 40031338	
			GD21A	10001024 - 40091034	
			GF21A	10001020 - 30121685	
			GP21A	40001006 - 40021860	
			HD21A	10001016 - 40029469	
			HF21A	10001034 - 30158393	
			Other Vehicle ID Number :		
808N201 - 808N314 530N010 - 530N012					

Note : Although the involved vehicles are within the above VIN ranges, not all vehicles in these ranges were sold in the U.S.

3. Total Number of Vehicles Potentially Affected:

366,572

4. Percentage of Vehicles Estimated to Actually Experience Malfunction:

Unknown

5. Description of Problem:

The Toyota Highlander vehicles have a Child Protection Lock ("CPL") system in both of the rear side doors. When an operator of the vehicle closes the door very hard with the CPL lever being in the lock position, there is a possibility that the lock lever may contact the body panel due to insufficient clearance between the CPL lever and the body panel, causing the CPL lever to move into the unlock position. This condition could allow the door to be opened with the inside door handle from the inside of the vehicle while the operator believes that the child protection lock was activated.

6. Chronology of Principal Events:

October – November 2003

TMC received a field report that the CPL lever for the right rear door could move from the lock to the unlock position due to the contact between the CPL lever and body panel if the door was closed very hard. TMC immediately began an investigation, including the measurement of the clearance between the CPL lever and body panel on production vehicles and development of a test to replicate the field condition. However, no problem was found when measuring the clearance and TMC could not replicate the phenomenon.

December 2003 – March 2004

TMC received another field report about the same phenomenon and reopened its investigation. As a result, it was confirmed that on the vehicles with less clearance between the CPL lever and body panel, the CPL lever slightly contacted the body panel if the door was closed very hard with the door glass opened. However, TMC could not observe the movement of the CPL lever from the locked position to the unlocked position. Nevertheless, to avoid contact between the CPL lever and the body panel, a design change was made to shorten the CPL lever in late January 2004.

TMC continued its investigation to see if there is a possibility that the CPL lever could move to the unlock position under another field condition (angle of the vehicle). In this investigation, it was confirmed that on a vehicle with very small clearance, when the door was closed very hard with the door glass opened and with the vehicle parked on an uphill road, the CPL lever could contact the body panel and move to the unlock position.

Early April 2004

Based on the above investigations, it was concluded that even though the operator of the vehicle activates the CPL, the CPL lever could move unintentionally from the lock position to the unlock position due to the contact between the CPL lever and the body panel when the door is closed very hard. Therefore Toyota decided to conduct a voluntary safety recall of all vehicles in the affected range.

This safety campaign will also be conducted in Canada, Australia, Japan and three other countries.

7. Description of Corrective Repair Action:

All known owners of the subject vehicles will be notified by first class mail to return their vehicles to a Toyota dealer for shortening of the CPL lever.

Reimbursement Plan for pre-notification remedies

The vehicles involved were built between November 2000 and January 2004. As the owner notification letters will be mailed out well within the active period of the Toyota New Vehicle Limited Warranty ("Warranty"), all involved vehicle owners for this recall would have been provided a repair at no cost under the Toyota's Warranty.

8. Recall Schedule:

Mailing of the owner notifications will commence early May and be completed before the end of June 2004.

Copies of the owner notification and dealer instructions will be submitted as soon as they are available.

Web Release Date: May 7, 2004

Make: TOYOTA	Model: Highlander	Year: 2001 through Early 2004
NHTSA CAMPAIGN ID Number:		Recall Date: April 7, 2004
Component: Latches/Locks/Linkages Equipment: Door, Latch		
Potential Number of Units Affected: Approximately 366,000		
Manufactured: This condition only affects certain 2001 through early 2004 model year Highlander vehicles produced from mid-November, 2000 to late January, 2004.		
Summary: The 2001 to early 2004 Model Year Highlander vehicles have a Child Protection Lock ("CPL") system on both of the rear side doors. When an operator of the vehicle closes the door very hard with the Child Protection Lock lever in the lock position, there is a possibility that the lever may contact the body panel due to insufficient clearance between the Child Protection Lock lever and the body panel, causing the Child Protection Lock lever to move into the unlock position.		
Consequence: This condition could allow the door to be opened from the inside while the operator believes that the child protection lock was activated.		
Remedy: Dealer will shorten the CPL lever. Owners will be notified in early May, 2004 through late June, 2004. Owners who take their vehicles to an authorized dealer on an agreed upon service date and do not receive the free remedy within a reasonable time should contact Toyota at 1-800-331-4331.		
Note: Customers can also contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Auto Safety Hotline at 1-888-DASH-2-DOT (1-888-327-4236).		