



**GENERAL MOTORS NORTH AMERICA**  
**Structure & Safety Integration**

04V-226  
 (3 pages)

May 10, 2004

Mr. Kenneth N. Weinstein  
 Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance  
 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Room 5821  
 Washington, D.C. 20590

2004 MAY 11 A

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

The following information is submitted pursuant to the requirements of 49 CFR 573.6 and applies to a determination by General Motors of a safety defect involving certain 2003 and 2004 model year Saab 9-3 Sport Sedan model vehicles.

573.6(c)(1): Saab Automobile AB (Saab), a subsidiary of General Motors Corporation (the designated agent for Saab).

573.6(c)(2)(3)(4): This information is shown on the attached sheet.

573.6(c)(5): Saab has decided that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety, exists in certain 2003 and 2004 model year Saab 9-3 Sport Sedans. Some of these vehicles were produced with seat belt retractors that were damaged during the manufacturing process by the supplier. If damaged, over time, the Automatic Tensioning System (ATS) cable in the seatbelt retractor could break; causing webbing spooled out by the user to not retract. This condition would be obvious to the driver and/or passenger. With this condition in the event of a vehicle crash, a front seat occupant may receive more severe injuries.

573.6(c)(6): Saab Automobile AB and the supplier (Takata) began an investigation in September of 2003 after receiving field reports of seat belt retractor malfunctions. The investigation revealed that the supplier had routed the retractor cable incorrectly in the ATS machine during assembly. This incorrect routing could damage the retractor wire by stripping the coating, which could cause the retractor cable to break. Takata analyzed the data and provided an estimated failure rate for the component.

Saab Statistical Engineering began an advanced failure rate analysis during November of 2003, and as a result of that analysis, decided to collect more field performance data and returned parts for further investigation.

In February of 2004 Saab Statistical Engineering disagreed with Takata's estimated failure rate. Takata collected additional information and completed a new statistical study on the forecasted failure in March 2004. In April 2004 after reviewing all available data, the Saab FPE Steering Committee recommended a worldwide Product Safety Campaign. On May 3, 2004 the European Field Action Decision Committee made the decision to conduct a worldwide Product Safety Campaign.

573.6(c)(8): Saab is currently developing a service procedure to replace seatbelt retractor assemblies on all involved vehicles.

Pursuant to 577.11(e), Saab does not believe notification about reimbursement is required for this recall. Involved vehicles are covered by the new vehicle warranty.



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573.6(c)(9): Saab is currently working with the supplier to obtain the parts necessary to begin this safety recall. Draft copies of the dealer bulletin and owner notification, and the scheduled mailing dates will be forwarded to NHTSA when they are available.

Sincerely,



Gay P. Kent  
Director  
Product Investigations

15017 - 04040  
Attachments

**VEHICLES POTENTIALLY AFFECTED BY MAKE, MODEL, AND MODEL YEAR  
PLUS INCLUSIVE DATES OF MANUFACTURE**

<u>MAKE</u>	<u>MODEL SERIES</u>	<u>MODEL YEAR</u>	<u>NUMBER INVOLVED</u>	<u>INCLUSIVE MANUFACTURING DATES (FROM) (TO)</u>		<u>DESCRIPTIVE INFO. TO PROPERLY IDENT. VEH.</u>	<u>EST. NO. V/CONDITION</u>
Saab	9-3	2003	25,355	07/02	08/03	Sport Sedans	* Unknown
Saab	9-3	2004	<del>5,980</del>	08/03	09/03	Sport Sedans	.
			31,335				

\* All affected vehicles will be corrected.  
15017 / 04040