

November 17, 2004

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

04V-551  
(4 pages)

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (HMC) is furnishing notification to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in accordance with 49 CFR Part 573 Defect and Noncompliance Reports related to the vehicles listed below.

573.6(c)(1)

**Name of manufacturer:** Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (HMC)  
Honda of America Manufacturing, Inc. (HAM)  
Honda de Mexico, S.A. DE C.V. (HDM)

**Manufacturer's agent:** William R. Willen  
American Honda Motor Co., Inc.  
1919 Torrance Blvd.  
Torrance, CA 90501-2746

573.6(c)(2)

**Identification of potentially affected vehicles:**

| <u>Make/Model</u>       | <u>Description</u>  | <u>VIN/Dates of Manufacture</u>   |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Honda Accord L4 sedan   | All 2004 model year | 1HGCM5***4A000013 - 1HGCM5***4A179672<br>May 14, 2003 to Aug. 25, 2004  |
|                         |                     | JHMCM5***4C000001 - JHMCM5***4C041070<br>Feb. 13, 2003 to Jul. 5, 2004  |
|                         |                     | 3HGCM5***4G700003 - 3HGCM5***4G712482<br>Oct. 1, 2003 to Aug. 30, 2004  |
| Certain 2005 model year |                     | 1HGCM5***5A000005 - 1HGCM5***5A023044<br>Mar. 25, 2004 to Oct. 1, 2004  |
|                         |                     | JHMCM5***5C000001 - JHMCM5***5C005196<br>Mar. 26, 2004 to Oct. 5, 2004  |
|                         |                     | 3HGCM5***5G700001 - 3HGCM5***5G700722<br>Jul. 1, 2004 to Sept. 30, 2004 |

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

The affected airbag design is unique to the vehicles above. The 2003 model year Accord 4D 4-cylinder design is different. The Accord V6 Sedan and Accord Coupe airbags are made by a different manufacturer and have a different design. A countermeasure has been applied to the airbags of vehicles after the affected VIN range.

573.6(c)(3)

**Total number of vehicles potentially affected:** 257,616

573.6(c)(4)

**Percentage of affected vehicles that contain the defect:** 100%

573.6(c)(5)

**Defect description:**

The 2004 Accord was used in vehicle compatibility testing conducted by NHTSA R&D. NHTSA's research test program subjects vehicles to conditions more severe than the current standards. The 2004 Accord complies with all current requirements of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 208, "Occupant Crash Protection." However, in the specific conditions of one research test configuration, a tear in the fabric of the driver's front airbag occurred after apparent contact with the inside surface of the airbag cover during deployment. A torn airbag may not offer the same level of protection, thereby increasing the risk of injury to the driver. No consumer incidents have been reported.

Honda is instituting this recall to resolve the concerns of NHTSA. An extensive number of tests, including crash testing, have been conducted on behalf of Honda in an attempt to replicate the result of the NHTSA tests, but the tests were unable to do so except in highly unusual, unrealistic circumstances. However, Honda does not wish to dispute NHTSA's concerns and is interested in minimizing any potential risk to motor vehicle safety, even though the subject event would be an extremely unlikely occurrence.

573.6(c)(6)

**Chronology:**

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Apr. 20, 2004 | During NHTSA's vehicle compatibility research testing, the first incident occurred. |
| Apr. 28, 2004 | HMC investigated the test vehicle with NHTSA and initiated an investigation.        |
| Jun. 29, 2004 | A second incident occurred during NHTSA's vehicle compatibility research test.      |
| Jul. 8, 2004  | HMC investigated the test vehicle with NHTSA.                                       |

573.6(c)(6)

**Chronology: (cont.)**

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Jul. 20, 2004 | HMC conducted a vehicle-to-vehicle test under the same conditions as NHTSA's test, and no incident occurred. HMC continued the investigation. |
| Oct. 20, 2004 | HMC had a technical meeting with NHTSA.   |
| Nov. 10, 2004 | HMC ended the investigation and initiated safety recall.  |

573.6(c)(8)(i)

**Program for remedying the defect:**

The owners of all affected vehicles will be notified by mail and asked to take their vehicle to an authorized Honda dealer. The dealer will install a protective fabric flap between the airbag module cover and the inner module, free of charge.

573.6(c)(8)(ii)

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| <b>Estimated date to e-mail preliminary notice to dealers:</b>            | Nov. 18, 2004 |
| <b>Estimated date to provide preliminary service bulletin to dealers:</b> | Nov. 19, 2004 |
| <b>Estimated date to provide final service bulletin to dealers:</b>       | Dec. 3, 2004  |
| <b>Estimated date to begin sending notifications to owners:</b>           | Dec. 6, 2004  |
| <b>Estimated date of completion of the notification:</b>                  | Dec. 17, 2004 |

573.6(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.

573.6(c)(10)

**Proposed owner notification letter submission:**

A draft of the owner notification will be sent to your office for review as soon as possible.

573.6(c)(11)

**Manufacturer's campaign number:**

P54.

Sincerely,

AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO., INC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William R. Willen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William R. Willen  
Managing Counsel  
Product Regulatory Office

WRW:ke