



05V-054

February 14, 2005

Mr. Ronald Medford
Senior Associate Administrator, Vehicle Safety
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W., Room 5321
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. Medford:

The following information is submitted pursuant to the requirements of 49 CFR 573.6 as it applies to a determination by General Motors of a safety defect involving certain 2005 model year Chevrolet Classic and Pontiac Grand Am vehicles.

573.6(c)(1): Chevrolet and Pontiac Divisions of General Motors Corporation.

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

573.6(c)(5): General Motors has decided that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety, exists in certain 2005 model year Chevrolet Classic and Pontiac Grand Am vehicles. Some of these vehicles were built with rear suspension knuckle bolts that are not to specification and could fracture under high loads that can occur in some driving conditions. If the bolt fractures, the rear suspension linkage could detach from the knuckle and the rear wheel would be able to turn inboard or outboard. If a rear wheel turns inboard or outboard, sudden changes in vehicle handling could occur, particularly at higher speeds, and the driver may not be able to control the vehicle and a crash could occur without warning.

573.6(c)(6): Textron Fastening Systems-Greenville had responsibility to heat treat and plate the rear suspension bolts according to its standard production process. Records indicate that Textron Fastening Systems forwarded three of four sub-lots to heat treat and plating correctly. One sub-lot was misrouted to the plater, bypassing heat-treat altogether. All four of these sub-lots were mixed during the sorting operation between October 07, 2004-October 14, 2004. This mixed lot of material (lot #264A) was then shipped to the Textron Fastening Systems-Holly Distribution Center, and then finally to Lansing Car Assembly. The initial shipment of suspect material went into Lansing Car Assembly on October 18, 2004.

On October 25, 2004, this condition was discovered at Lansing Car Assembly, when some rear suspension bolts broke during installation. Lansing Car Assembly implemented containment and believed it had contained all suspect bolts. Lansing Car Assembly returned all suspect bolts to Textron Fastening Systems-Holly Distribution Center.

Textron Fastening Systems reprocessed all of the suspect lot, requiring all material to be stripped, annealed, heat treated, and re-plated. On November 4, 2004, Textron Fastening Systems-Holly Distribution Center received 4,725 bolts from Lansing Car Assembly. A shipper was created by Textron Fastening Systems-Holly Distribution Center to ship these bolts to the sorting operation instead of the heat treat operation, missing the strip, heat treat and re-plate operations. The sorting operation mixed 25,050 new pieces and the suspect lot of 4,725 pieces. Textron Fastening Systems-Holly Distribution Center began shipping from this larger suspect lot to Lansing Car Assembly on December 2, 2004. Lansing Car Assembly again experienced broken bolts during installation starting on January 10, 2005.

On January 11, 2005, Textron Fastening Systems provided certified material for replacement of all suspect material at the plant.

Product Investigations

Mail Code: 480-111-E18 • 30200 Mound Road • Warren, MI 48090
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On January 17, 2005, the Engineering Group Manager, Designing Engineer, and PI Manager met to develop the plan to determine the Effect on Vehicle Performance.

On January 20, 2005, a 2004 Malibu was evaluated at the Milford Proving Grounds by the Vehicle Dynamics Engineering Group Manager, with a separated front lateral link on the right rear wheel. On January 26, 2005, Fastener Engineers developed the plan to determine tension relaxation in this usage by lab test. On January 31, 2005, Engineering Design, Materials, and Fastener Engineers met to develop an analysis plan to determine bolt stress from vehicle usage. On February 1, 2005, analysis of the attachment under service loads was completed.

The issue was presented to the FPE Director on February 3, 2005. The issue was presented to the GMNA Senior Management Committee (SMC) and on February 7, 2005 the Field Action Decision Committee decided to conduct a safety recall.

573.6(c)(8): Dealers are to replace both rear suspension knuckle bolts.

Pursuant to 577.11(e), General Motors does not plan to notify owners about reimbursement because all involved vehicles are within the new vehicle warranty coverage.

573.6(c)(9): On February 7, 2005, GM Product Investigations notified NHTSA of this recall in a telephone conversation. The dealers were notified on February 8, 2005 and owner letters will be mailed on February 16, 2005. Attached is the dealer bulletin and owner letter.

Sincerely,



Gay P. Kent
Director
Product Investigations

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Attachments

573.6(c)(2),(3),(4)

**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. W/CONDITION</u>
Chevrolet	N	2005	6,617	10/2004	01/2005	Classic	*Unknown
Pontiac	N	2005	2,785	10/2004	01/2005	Grand Am	"
		GM Total:	9,402				

* All affected vehicles will be corrected.

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