

NISSAN

NISSAN NORTH AMERICA, INC.

Corporate Office
18501 South Figueroa St.
Gardena, California 90248-4500
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 191
Gardena, California 90248-0191
Telephone: 310.532.3111

July 12, 2005

05V-319
(4 pages)

Mr. Ron Medford
Acting Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. Medford

We are transmitting the enclosed Defect Information Report in accordance with 49 CFR Part 573. A voluntary recall campaign will be initiated and your office provided with the notices. Nissan currently plans to begin owner notification on August 2, 2005.

We will include a statement in the Part 577 owner notification concerning reimbursement for the cost of obtaining a pre-notification remedy.

Very truly,



Frank D. Slaveter
Senior Manager,
Technical Compliance

Encl.

RECEIVED
05V-319
2005 JUL 15 P 1:40
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT

1. Manufacturer:

Nissan North America, Inc.

2. Vehicles Potentially Involved:

2003 - 2005 model year Nissan Murano vehicles produced from April 8, 2002 (start of production) to September 24, 2004. Vehicles manufactured after this date are not affected. Other Nissan models which use the same alternator as the subject vehicles include the 2003-2004 model year Nissan Maxima and Infiniti I35. However, these other models are not defective as described in item 5, because none of them are available with a continuously variable transmission (CVT). (Engine speed in vehicles with a CVT changes quickly as a vehicle accelerates or decelerates compared to a vehicle with a conventional transmission because of the more rapid change in the gear ratio in a CVT. As a result, other vehicles are not defective as described below.)

3. Total Number of Vehicles Potentially Involved:

Approximately 125,466.

4. Percentage of Vehicles Estimated to Actually Contain the Defect:

Unknown

5. Description of the Defect:

An open circuit in the alternator can occur due to wire fatigue caused by movement of the rotor coil during rapid changes in engine speed in vehicles equipped with a continuously variable transmission (CVT). Higher engine compartment temperature in the Murano compared to other Nissan models may also be a contributing factor to the wire fatigue.

When an open circuit occurs in the alternator, the charge warning and brake warning lamps come on. If a driver does not seek repair of the vehicle immediately as instructed in the Owners Manual and continues to drive the vehicle in this condition, the vehicle will operate normally for about one hour. After this time period, the battery voltage will drop to a level that causes the engine control module to go into a fail safe mode. During fail safe mode, which lasts about ten minutes, vehicle speed will be reduced due to the throttle plate being held in a fixed position. After this time period, the engine will stop running. The fail safe mode provides a second obvious warning to the driver that there is a problem and that the

driver should pull off the road as soon as possible and stop driving the vehicle. The actual speed of the vehicle will depend upon the speed of the vehicle when it went into the fail safe mode, the operation of the throttle pedal by the driver and the slope of the road. In some cases, vehicle speed during the fail safe mode may not be adequate to allow a driver to move safely to the side of the road or to exit a highway.

The name and address of the manufacturer of the alternator is:

Hitachi, Ltd.
6-6 Marunouchi 1-chome
Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo, 100-8280 Japan

6. Chronology of Principal Events

November 2004 – NHTSA opened a Preliminary Evaluation on the subject vehicles due to owner complaints of alternator failure causing the engine to stall.

January 2005 – Nissan responded to NHTSA information request.

February – June 2005 – Nissan continued its investigation of the safety risk of incidents of alternator failure.

June 8, 2005 – Nissan notified NHTSA that it intended to conduct a service campaign for the subject vehicles and that the Japanese federal agency responsible for vehicle safety had approved such a campaign for these vehicles sold in Japan.

July 4, 2005 – After further investigation, Nissan determined that a safety related defect might exist and that a recall campaign should be conducted.

7. Description of Corrective Action:

Nissan plans to begin notifying owners of potentially affected vehicles on August 3, 2005. The alternator will be replaced with a new version which has been modified to prevent movement of the coil. In some cases vehicles have already had this new version alternator installed under warranty, and some 2005 model year vehicles had this alternator installed in production. The part number of the alternator will be checked to determine if the alternator needs replacement.

8. Copy of Notices:

Copies of all notices will be provided to NHTSA as they become available.