

Safety Defect and Noncompliance Report Guide for Vehicles
PART 573 Defect and Noncompliance Responsibility and Reports¹

On August 12, 2005, Girardin Minibus decided that a noncompliance with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 221 exists in the motor vehicles listed below, and is furnishing notification to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in accordance with 49 CFR Part 573 Defect and Noncompliance Responsibility and Reports.

Date this report was prepared: August 19, 2005 & revised on August 26, 2005

Furnish the manufacturer's identification code for this recall (if applicable): 05-011-JSU

1. Identify the full corporate name of the fabricating manufacturer of the vehicle being recalled. If the recalled vehicle is imported, provide the name and mailing address of the designated agent as prescribed by 49 U.S.C. §30164.

Girardin Minibus, Inc.

Trans-Canada Highway, Drummondville, Quebec, J2B 6V4

Identify the corporate official, by name and title, whom the agency should contact with respect to this recall.

Luc Guillemette

Service & Warranty manager

Telephone Number: 819-477-8222 ext. 455 Fax No.: 819-477-1848

Name and Title of Person who prepared this report.

Luc Guillemette

Service & Warranty manager

Signed: _____

¹ Each manufacturer must furnish a report, to the Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance, for each defect or noncompliance condition which relates to motor vehicle safety.

This guide was developed from 49 CFR Part 573, "Defect and Noncompliance Responsibility and Reports" and also outlines information currently requested. Any questions, please consult the complete Part 573 or contact Mr. George Person at (202) 366-5210 or by FAX at (202) 366-7882.

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DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

I. Identify the Vehicle Models Involved in the Recall

2. Identify the Vehicles Involved in the Recall, for each make and model or applicable vehicle line (provide illustrations or photographs as necessary to describe the vehicle), provide:

Make(s): Girardin Model Years Involved: 2003, 2004, 2005

Model(s): MBII & MBIV Ford & GM (diesel & gas)

Production Dates: Beginning: August 17, 2004 Ending: October 29, 2004

VIN Range: Beginning: ----- Ending: -----

Vehicle Type: _____ Bodystyle: _____

Descriptive information which characterizes/distinguishes the recalled vehicles from those model vehicles not included in the recall:

Make(s): _____ Model Years Involved: _____ Model(s): _____

Production Dates: Beginning: _____ Ending: _____

VIN Range: Beginning: _____ Ending: _____

Vehicle Type: _____ Bodystyle: _____

Descriptive information which characterizes/distinguishes the recalled vehicles from those model vehicles not included in the recall:

Make(s): _____ Model Years Involved: _____ Model(s): _____

Production Dates: Beginning: _____ Ending: _____

VIN Range: Beginning: _____ Ending: _____

Vehicle Type: _____ Bodystyle: _____

Descriptive information which characterizes/distinguishes the recalled vehicles from those model vehicles not included in the recall:

Identify the approximate percentage of the production of all the recalled models manufactured by your company between the inclusive dates of manufacture provided above, that the recalled model population represents. For example, if the recall involved Widgets equipped with certain items of equipment from January 1, 1996 through April 1, 1997, then what was the percentage of the recalled Widgets of all Widgets manufactured during that time period.

36%

II. Identify the Recall Population

3. Furnish the total number of vehicles recalled potentially containing the defect or noncompliance.

<u>Model</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Potentially Involved Vehicles</u>
MB2 School Bus	2003	1
MB4 School Bus	2004	5
MB2 School Bus	2005	3
MB4 School Bus	2005	1

Total Number Potentially Affected by the Recall: 10

4. Furnish the approximate percentage of the total number of vehicles estimated to actually contain the defect or noncompliance: 75%

Identify and describe how the recall population was determined--in particular how the recalled models were selected and the basis for the beginning and final dates of manufacture of the recalled vehicles:

On August 26, 2004 our 2nd line of production phased out and was closed on September 10, 2004. During that period of time, the employee supervision was not adequate and some joint strength operations, on school buses, were done by untrained employees. The last vehicle manufactured on line 2 was completed on October 29, 2004. In order to be sure that we cover every vehicle that may have a joint strength defect, we pushed back our recall beginning date to August 17. We know that the problems we encountered on line 2 did not happen on line 1, where our regular & trained employees were not affected.

III. Describe the Defect or Noncompliance

5. Describe the defect or noncompliance. The description should address the nature and physical location of the defect or noncompliance. Illustrations should be provided as appropriate.

Some of the joints may not be strong enough because of an incorrect installation of panels. This could possibly result in a noncompliance to FMVSS 221. The physical locations of the noncompliant joints are: the longitudinal joint on the center of the roof (exterior), the joints between the ceiling panels, between the rearmost ceiling panel and top panel of rear wall, between ceiling panels and the longitudinal covers over windows, between this cover and structural members over the windows, and every joint created by the aluminum panels of the rear wall. See drawing attached.

Describe the cause(s) of the defect or noncompliance condition.

For a short period of time, joint strength installation procedure may have not been followed adequately.

Describe the consequence(s) of the defect or noncompliance condition.

Some of the joints may not be strong enough and this could possibly result in a noncompliance to FMVSS 221.

Identify any warning which can (a) precede or (b) occur.

There is no warning of the noncompliance condition.

If the defect or noncompliance is in a component or assembly purchased from a supplier, identify the supplier by corporate name and address.

Identify the name and title of the chief executive officer or knowledgeable representative of the supplier:

IV. Provide the Chronology in Determining the Defect/Noncompliance

If the recall is for a defect, complete item 6, otherwise item 7.

6. With respect to a defect, furnish a chronological summary (including dates) of all the principle events that were the basis for the determination of the defect. The summary should include, but not be limited to, the number of reports, accidents, injuries, fatalities, and warranty claims.

7. With respect to a noncompliance, identify and provide the test results or other data (in chronological order and including dates) on which the noncompliance was determined.

Some tests were done by NHTSA at MGA Research Center on Girardin minibus number 05-23051, VIN: 1FDSE35L85HA02436. We were advised on July 7, 2005 this vehicle did not pass the FMVSS 221 tests. On July 8, 2005, an engineer working for Girardin Minibus went to MGA Research Center to discuss the results of the FMVSS 221 tests. From August 3rd until August 12th, we did internal investigation to determine what caused the noncompliance.

A previous test was also done by NHTSA on FMVSS 210. That test also failed. The same configuration was retested by an independent party, which showed conformity to the standard. We now conclude that poor joints between panels caused that test failure. These joints led to a softer structure, which was not able to withstand the FMVSS 210 seat test. These joints will be corrected by this recall campaign.

V. Identify the Remedy

8. A description of the manufacturer's program for remedying the defect or noncompliance. This program shall include a plan for reimbursing an owner or purchaser who incurred costs to obtain a remedy for the problem addressed by the recall within a reasonable time in advance of the manufacturer's notification of owners, purchasers and dealers, in accordance with §573.13 of this part. A manufacturer's plan may incorporate by reference a general reimbursement plan it previously submitted to NHTSA, together with information specific to the individual recall. Information required by §573.13 that is not in a general reimbursement plan shall be submitted in the manufacturer's report to NHTSA under this section. If a manufacturer submits one or more general reimbursement plans, the manufacturer shall update each plan every two years, in accordance with §573.13. The manufacturer's remedy program and reimbursement plans will be available for inspection by the public at NHTSA headquarters.

The reimbursing procedure will be included on the notification letter we will supply to the owners.

9. Furnish a description of the manufacturer's remedy for the defect or noncompliance. Clearly describe the differences between the recall condition and the remedy.

- ❖ On the roof, apply a bonded strip of aluminum over the existing joint.
- ❖ Ceiling panel joints will be stripped off and new bonded joints will be made.
- ❖ The rear wall top panel and longitudinal covers over windows will be removed and replaced by new ones, and installed with proper procedures.
- ❖ Other rear wall aluminum panels will have their joints stripped off and redone.

We will ensure that all these new joints will conform to the requirements of FMVSS 221.

Clearly describe the distinguishing characteristics of the remedy component/assembly versus the recalled component/assembly.

A part of the aluminum strip that will be added on the roof of the vehicles, the other remedies will not have any distinguishing characteristics.

Identify and describe how and when the recall condition was corrected in production. If the production remedy was identical to the recall remedy in the field, so state. If the product was discontinued, so state.

Problems encountered on line 2 were resolved with the end of it. As stated before, we did not encounter these problems on line 1.

VI. Identify the Recall Schedule

10. Furnish a schedule or agenda (with specific dates) for notification to other manufacturers, dealers/retailers, and purchasers. Please, identify any foreseeable problems with implementing the recall.

We will mail a letter to the owners (dealers or end users) of all the minibuses affected by this recall by a date to be confirmed. The parts needed and the recall replacement procedure will be shipped free of charge to all the owners of the minibuses as soon as we have located them. The labor will be reimbursed.

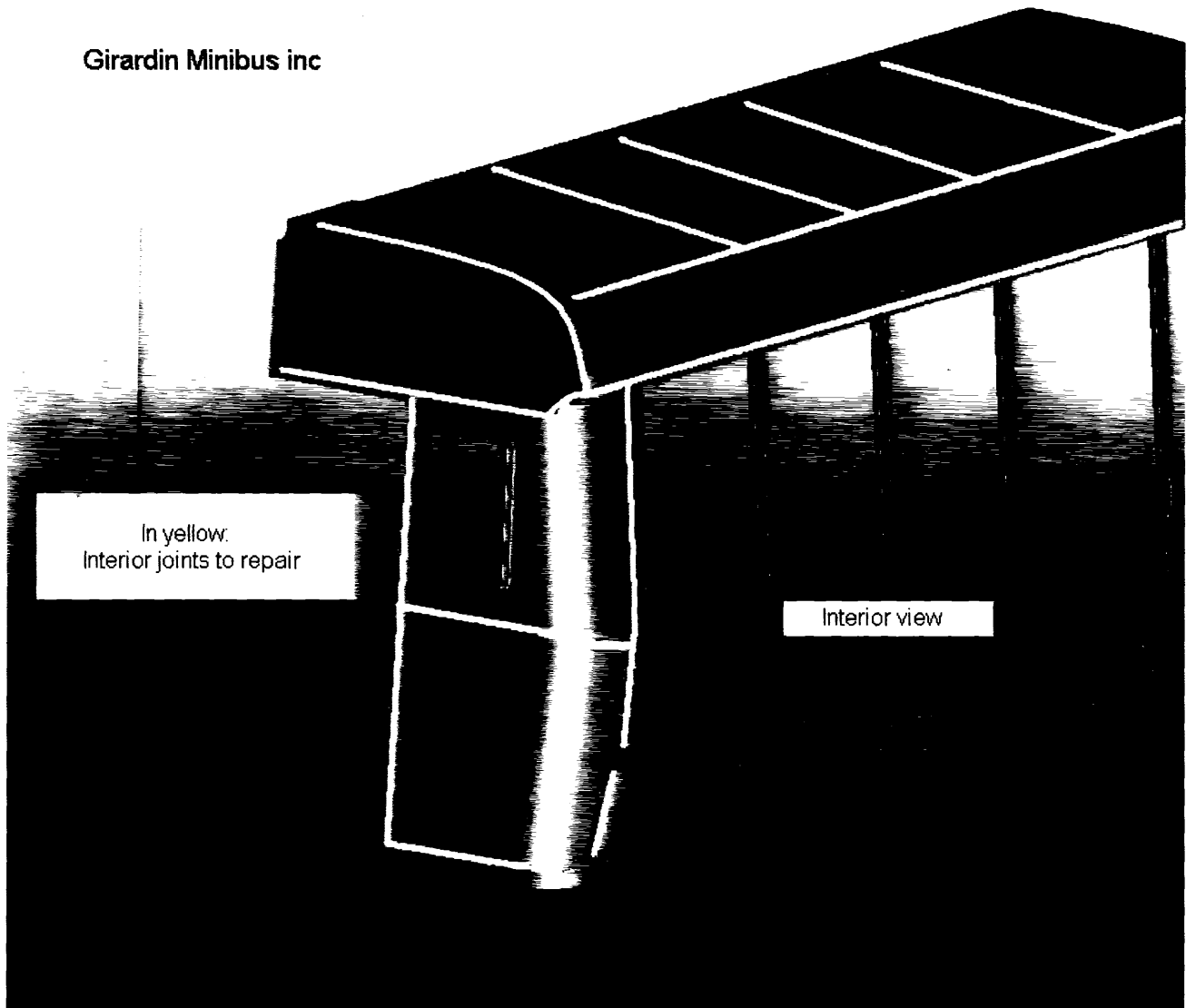
VII. Furnish Recall Communications

11. Furnish a final copy of all notices, bulletins, and other communications that relate directly to the defect or noncompliance and which are sent to more than one manufacturer, distributor, or purchaser. This includes all communications (including both original and follow-up) concerning this recall from the time your company determines the defect or noncompliance condition on, not just the initial notification. *A DRAFT copy of the notification documents should be submitted to this office by Fax (202-366-7882) for review prior to mailing.*

We will supply a draft copy of the notification letter as soon as possible.

Note that these documents are to be submitted separately from those provided in accordance with Part 579.5 requirements.

Girardin Minibus inc



In yellow:
Interior joints to repair

Interior view