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October 26, 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

OFFICE OF
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

05V-494
(3 pages)

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 2002-03 GMC Envoy XL; Chevrolet Trailblazer EXT; and 2003 Isuzu Ascender - 7 Passenger model vehicles in the 20 corrosion states plus Washington, D.C.

573.6(c)(1): GMC and Chevrolet Divisions of General Motors Corporation and Isuzu Motors America, Inc.

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

573.6(c)(5): General Motors has decided that certain 2002-03 GMC Envoy XL; Chevrolet Trailblazer EXT; and 2003 Isuzu Ascender - 7 passenger model vehicles in the 20 corrosion states plus Washington, D.C., have a rear side closure latch that may not latch or not unlatch due to corrosion caused by road splash, such as water and road salt. Vehicles equipped with a driver information center may or may not indicate that the door is unlatched. If the door is not latched properly and it goes unnoticed, it may open while the vehicle is in motion.

573.6(c)(6): In the course of routine warranty monitoring of the subject vehicles, GM's Brand Quality activity found corrosion in latches returned by GM dealers making warranty repairs for a variety of latch-related customer complaints. The issue was referred to engineering for investigation of possible causes of the condition.

Because latches of identical design installed in a variety of other GM vehicles exhibited no unusual corrosion, latch design was eliminated as the cause. Vehicle level static testing was conducted to evaluate air flow patterns along the rear side closures and sealing characteristics. Based on these results, further testing was conducted to duplicate the airflow pattern in an on-road environment. This testing indicated that corrosion was caused by excessive debris and contaminants deposited in the latch mechanism from air drawn in between the door edge and the C-pillar. This finding led to a recommendation that a seal be added to the rear rocker molding as a product improvement to address the customer dissatisfaction reflected in the warranty data.

GM's investigation and ongoing consideration of whether it should conduct a field action to proactively address customer complaints continued beyond its implementation of the seal in production. Since the predominant failure mode generated complaints of "hard to open," GM continued to view the condition as a customer satisfaction issue. In addition, warranty data seemed to indicate a declining trend in calendar year 2005. However, further study revealed that warranty for all corrosion-related complaints exhibited a similar pattern over the same period of time, GM concluded that action to prevent further latch complaints was warranted.

Once it was determined that field action would be appropriate, GM voluntarily reviewed its proposal for a customer satisfaction program with NHTSA personnel on October 5, 2005, emphasizing that 99.4% of the warranty claims with verbatim comments contained customer complaints such as: "hard to open", "door alignment", "will not latch." NHTSA reviewed GM's rationale, but based on a number of considerations, including prior safety recalls involving similar conditions and rates of occurrence, informed GM that it believed a safety recall was the appropriate field action under the circumstances.

Product Investigations

Mail Code: 480-111-E18 • 30200 Mound Road • Warren, MI 48090-9010
05077-573 Letter



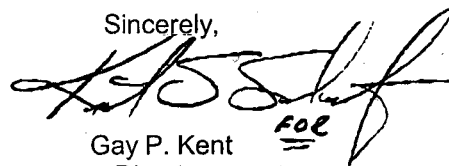
The issue was presented to the Field Performance Evaluation Review Committee (FPERC) and on October 20, 2005, the Executive Field Action Decision Committee (EFADC) decided to conduct a safety recall in the 20 corrosion states and Washington, D.C.

573.6(c)(8): Dealers are to install a seal along the lower part of the rocker panel to prevent intrusion of corrosive material, and inspect the rear side closure latches. Functional latches will be cleaned and lubricated. Non-functioning latches will be replaced.

Pursuant to 577.11(e), GM will provide reimbursement to owners for repairs completed on or before ten days after the owner mailing is completed, according to the plan submitted on January 14, 2005.

573.6(c)(9): GM will provide copies of the dealer bulletin and owner letter when available. It is anticipated that parts will be available in January 2006.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gay P. Kent". The signature is stylized and includes a small "FOE" mark with a horizontal line underneath it.

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 | S/T | 2002 | 13,085 | 01/2002 | 06/2002 | TrailBlazer EXT | 100% |
| Chevrolet | S/T | 2003 | 47,400 | 04/2002 | 07/2003 | TrailBlazer EXT | " |
| GMC | S/T | 2002 | 7,141 | 01/2002 | 06/2002 | Envoy XL | " |
| GMC | S/T | 2003 | 29,426 | 04/2002 | 07/2003 | Envoy XL | " |
| Isuzu | S/T | 2003 | 955 | 04/2002 | 07/2003 | Ascender | " |
| Estimated GM Total: | | | 98,007 | | | | |

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