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(7pgs)

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

On April 6, 2006, Girardin Minibus received a letter from Ricon about a recall on certain wheelchair lift products **and decided that a defect which relates to motor vehicle safety exits 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: April 20, 2006

Furnish the manufacturer's identification code for this recall (if applicable): 06-013-LTU

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) Canada 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: 

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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.

II. Identify the Recall Population

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

Model	Year	Number of Potentially Involved Vehicles
MB IV Commercial bus	2005	1
MB IV School bus	2005	4
MB IV Commercial bus	2006	5
MB IV School bus	2006	2
MB II School bus	2006	1

Total Number Potentially Affected by the recall: 13

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

Possibly 100% of the vehicles equipped with Ricon lifts manufactured between June 12, 2005 and July 1, 2005 inclusive (lifts P/N K5505-F1020000A & K2010-F1020000A).

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:

Ricon supplied a complete list of the lifts we purchased that were manufactured during the specified time period. All lift models and serial numbers were included. We determined the recall population according to the lift serial numbers given by Ricon.

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.

The vertical arms on certain Ricon K serie platform style wheelchair lifts manufactured between June 12 and July 1, 2005 were improperly welded which fails to comply with FMVSS no 403 "Platform lift systems for motor vehicles".

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

The welding process may not have achieved full penetration along the seam of the weld of the vertical arms. (See Ricon report for more details).

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

The exterior portion of the vertical arm will exhibit signs of cracking and the lift will become difficult to stow or deploy. During these operations the lift will typically twist to one side and often hit the doorframe of the vehicle. When stowed, the lift will typically lean into the vehicle more than normal. In the event this condition occurs during passenger operations it may not be possible to close the lift door causing the vehicle interlocks to remain engaged preventing movement of the vehicle or the ability to load or unload passengers with disabilities from the vehicle. (See Ricon report for more details).

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

A visual inspection of the weldment may reveal cracking but it must be done when the lift is in the stowed position because signs of cracking may not be visible when the platform is at floor level or below or is occupied because the weld joint is in compression at this time. Also the lift will become difficult to stow or deploy.

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

Ricon Corporation
7900 Nelson Road
Panorama City, California 91402

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

Larry McNutt, Director of Customer Support
Telephone number: 818-267-3075
Fax number: 818-267-3001
E-mail: lmcnutt@riconcorp.com

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.

On April 6, 2006, we received a letter from Ricon about a recall of certain wheelchair lift products built between June 12, 2005 and July 1, 2005 inclusive. Ricon has enclosed a complete list of the lifts Girardin Minibus purchased that were manufactured during the specified time period. All lift models & serial numbers were included. We determined the involved vehicles according to the list supplied by Ricon.

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.

Ricon had already supplied this information to NHTSA.

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.

A notification letter will be mailed to the end users & dealers. We will recommend them to inspect the exterior weld seams on each side of BOTH vertical arms looking for visible signs of cracking as per Ricon instructions. If there are visible signs of cracking or if they have difficulty deploying or stowing the lift, they will have to contact Ricon at 800-322-2884. Ricon will work with them to replace the vertical arm(s) as quickly as possible.

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.

We will ask our end-user customers to do the inspection recommended by Ricon:

1. Place the vehicle in a safe position and operate the lift through one complete cycle unoccupied.
2. With the lift in the stowed position, inspect the exterior weld seams on each side of BOTH vertical arms looking for visible signs of cracking. (See drawing of K Serie wheelchair lift components attached).
3. If the lift operates normally and there is no signs of cracking along the weld joints, the lift may continue to be safely operated. This visual inspection should be repeated during each scheduled maintenance interval as outlined in the Ricon operator's manual.

If there are visible signs of cracking, or if the end-user customer has difficulty deploying or stowing the lift, the operator should take the following steps:

- a) Return the lift to the stowed position in the vehicle and turn off power to the hand control.
- b) Tag the lift to show it is NOT OPERATIONAL following the own "lockout/red tag" procedures.
- c) Contact Ricon Customer Support Dept. at 800-322-2884 to report the lift's condition.
- d) DO NOT USE THE LIFT again until an authorized factory-trained technician has completed all repairs.

Ricon will work with the end-user to replace the vertical arm(s) as quickly as possible. If the end-user is already factory trained to perform this service, the repairs can be done at the operator's location. If the end-user is not factory trained to perform this service, Ricon will arrange for the repairs to be done at the nearest Ricon authorized service center/dealer. In some cases, these repairs may be performed by Ricon Corp. personnel.

Ricon has elected to replace both arms on each lift even if both are not cracked. They will provide all the necessary replacement parts at No Charge. If the repairs are done by the end-user, Ricon will pay one-hour labor at 62.00\$US in accordance with their "Labor Allowance Schedule".

Ricon will provide a full one-year parts & labor warranty on the new arms.

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

The new vertical arms have weld with full penetration.

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.

Wheelchair lifts we received after July 1, 2005 had correct weld on vertical arms & did comply with FMVSS standard no. 403 according to Ricon information. 12 of 13 recalled lifts have already been installed in Girardin Minibuses. These minibuses have also been delivered to the end users. The remaining lift, here in stock, will be verified and repaired (if needed) before we deliver the vehicle.

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.

Girardin Minibus anticipates notifying its dealers no later than April 28, 2006. Notification letters will be sent to the end users no later than 2 weeks after we receive approval from NHTSA.

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.*

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

You will find enclosed a draft copy of the notification letter.