



U.S. Department
of Transportation

400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

February 23, 2007

DAVID M. MIHALICK
STANDARDS COMPLIANCE MANAGER
THOR INDUSTRIES
419 WEST PIKE STREET,
P.O. BOX 629
JACKSON CENTER, OH 45334-0629

NVS-215dgl
07V-061

Subject: WHEELCHAIR LIFTS/RICON/FMVSS 403

Dear MR. MIHALICK:

This letter is to acknowledge your recent noncompliance information report. Please review the following information to ensure that it conforms to your records as this information is being made available to the public. If the information does not agree with your records, please contact us immediately to discuss your concerns.

Makes/Models/Model Years:

CHAMPION/CHALLENGER/2006
CHAMPION/CORPORAL/2006
CHAMPION/CRUSADER/2006
CHAMPION/CTS/2006
CHAMPION/DEFENDER/2006

NHTSA Campaign Number: 07V-061

Mfg's Report Date: February 14, 2007

Components: EQUIPMENT ADAPTIVE

Potential Number of Units Affected: 83

Summary:

CERTAIN BUSES EQUIPPED WITH RICON PLATFORM STYLE WHEELCHAIR LIFTS FAIL TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF FEDERAL MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY STANDARD NO. 403, "PLATFORM LIFT SYSTEMS FOR MOTOR VEHICLES." THE INNER BARRIER INTERLOCK SWITCH SYSTEM IN THE LIFT BASEPLATE MAY NOT DETECT THE PRESENCE OF A PASSENGER (EITHER WHEELCHAIR OR STANDEE) ON THE BARRIER AND CAN ALLOW THE PLATFORM TO MOVE DOWN MORE THAN ONE INCH BELOW FLOOR LEVEL WHEN OCCUPIED.

Consequence:

IN THE EVENT THIS CONDITION OCCURS DURING PASSENGER OPERATIONS, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE FOR THE WHEELCHAIR TO TIP BACKWARDS ONTO THE PLATFORM IF THE USER IS BACKING ONTO THE LIFT FROM INSIDE THE VEHICLE AND HAS THE SMALL FRONT WHEELS FULLY OR PARTIALLY ON THE INNER BARRIER WHEN THE PLATFORM WAS LOWERED. A PERSON STANDING COULD LOSE HIS OR HER BALANCE IF THEY WERE POSITIONED FULLY OR PARTLY ON THE INNER BARRIER WHEN THE PLATFORM WAS LOWERED. EITHER CONDITION COULD CAUSE PERSONAL INJURY.

Remedy:

CHAMPION BUS IS WORKING WITH RICON TO REPAIR THESE WHEELCHAIR LIFTS (PLEASE SEE 06E101). OWNERS CAN CONTACT RICON AT 800-322-2884 OR CHAMPION BUS AT 1-800-331-5761.

Notes:

CUSTOMERS MAY CONTACT THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION'S VEHICLE SAFETY HOTLINE AT 1-888-327-4236 (TTY: 1-800-424-9153); OR GO TO [HTTP://WWW.SAFERCAR.GOV](http://www.safercar.gov).

Under 49 U.S.C. § 30112(a), it is illegal for anyone, including a manufacturer, distributor, dealer, or retailer to sell an item of equipment or vehicle that fails to comply with all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

We have reviewed your proposed owner letter and it does not meet the requirements of Part 577.

The second paragraph should read: Champion Bus, Inc. has decided that certain 2006 model year Defender, Challenger, Crusader, and CTS buses fail to conform to Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 403, "Platform Lift System for Motor Vehicle".

A risk needs to be added i.e., A person standing could lose his or her balance if they were positioned fully or partly on the inner barrier when the platform was lowered. Either condition could cause personal injury.

Please provide the following additional information and be reminded of the following requirements:

Please provide an estimated dealer notification date as well as an owner notification date (month/day/year).

Copies of all notices, bulletins, dealer notifications, and other communications that relate to this recall, including a copy of the final owner notification letter and any subsequent owner follow-up notification letter(s), are required to be submitted to this office no later than 5 days after they are originally sent (if they are sent to more than one manufacturer, distributor, dealer, or purchaser/owner).

As stated in your report, Ricon will be handling the remedy and quarterly reporting for this campaign. However, please be advised that 49 CFR 573.6 provides that the vehicle manufacturer is responsible for any safety related defect or any noncompliance in the vehicle or any item of original equipment. If Ricon's campaign is not satisfactory, you may be required to conduct a follow-up notification.

Your contacts for this recall will be Pat Wallace or Delia Lopez, who may be reached by phone at 202-366-5232 or 202-366-9525 or by email at patricia.wallace@dot.gov or delia.lopez@dot.gov. We look forward to working with you for successful completion of this recall campaign.

Sincerely,



for George H. Person, Chief
Recall Management Division
Office of Defects Investigation
Enforcement