



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

April 24, 2008

MR. CHRIS TINTO
VICE PRESIDENT
TECHNICAL & REGULATOR AFFAIRS
TOYOTA MOTOR NORTH AMERICA, INC.
WASHINGTON OFFICE
601 THIRTEENTH STREET, NW., SUITE 910 SOUTH
WASHINGTON, DC 20005

NVS-215paw
08V-181

SUBJECT: FMVSS 208/THIRD ROW REAR SEAT BELTS

DEAR MR. TINTO:

This letter serves to acknowledge Toyota Motor Corporation's notification to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) of a safety noncompliance with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 208, "Occupant Crash Protection," in the products described below for which a safety recall campaign shall be conducted pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30119.

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:

TOYOTA/HIGHLANDER/2008
TOYOTA/HIGHLANDER HYBRID/2008

NHTSA Campaign Number: 08V-181

Mfg's Report Date: April 18, 2008

Components: SEAT BELTS: REAR

Potential Number of Units Affected: 90,189

Summary:

TOYOTA IS RECALLING 90,189 MY 2008 HIGHLANDER AND HIGHLANDER HYBRID PASSENGER VEHICLES EQUIPPED WITH A THIRD ROW SEAT. THESE VEHICLES FAIL TO CONFORM TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF FEDERAL MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY STANDARD NO. 208, "OCCUPANT CRASH PROTECTION." THE NON-DRIVER DESIGNATED SEATING POSITIONS (DSP) ON THESE VEHICLES IS EQUIPPED WITH SEAT BELT ASSEMBLIES THAT HAVE A FEATURE THAT CONVERTS THE RETRACTOR FROM AN EMERGENCY LOCKING RETRACTOR (ELR) TO AN AUTOMATIC LOCKING RETRACTOR (ALR). THE BELTS CONVERT TO THE ALR MODE AFTER THE WEBBING HAS BEEN FULLY WITHDRAWN FROM THE RETRACTOR. THE SYSTEM IS DESIGNED SO THAT AS THE BELT IS RELEASED INTO THE RETRACTOR, THE SYSTEM REMAINS IN THE ALR MODE SO THAT A CHILD RESTRAINT SYSTEM (CRS) CAN BE TIGHTLY SECURED.

Consequence:

HOWEVER, FOR THE TWO THIRD ROW DSP'S ON THESE VEHICLES, THE ALR MODE DEACTIVATES BEFORE THE WEBBING IS FULLY RETRACTED, SO THAT IT WILL NOT LOCK WHEN CERTAIN REAR-FACING CRS'S THAT HAVE A SHORT SEAT BELT ROUTING PATH ARE INSTALLED IN THE VEHICLE. IN THE EVENT OF A CRASH, THE CHILD MAY NOT BE ADEQUATELY PROTECTED POSSIBLY RESULTING IN INJURY.

Remedy:

DEALERS WILL INSTALL A NEWLY DESIGNED SEAT BELT COMPONENT FREE OF CHARGE. THE MANUFACTURER HAS NOT YET PROVIDED AN OWNER NOTIFICATION SCHEDULE FOR THIS CAMPAIGN. OWNERS MAY CONTACT TOYOTA AT 1-800-331-4331.

Notes:

CUSTOMERS MAY ALSO 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.

The information in your noncompliance report appears to satisfy the requirements of 49 CFR 573.6 except for the following items:

You are required to submit a draft owner notification letter to this office no less than five days prior to mailing it to the customers. Also, 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).

You are required to provide an estimated date including month, day, and year, when you will send notifications to owners, dealers, and distributors as soon as it becomes available.

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

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 Part 573.7, submission of the first of six consecutive quarterly status reports is required within one month after the close of the calendar quarter in which notification to purchasers occurs. Therefore, the first quarterly report will be due on or before 30 days after the close of the calendar quarter.

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, Delia.lopez@dot.gov, or through the office email at RMD.ODI@dot.gov. We look forward to working with you for successful completion of this recall campaign.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Wallace".

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