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11E-022  
(3 pages)

**Affinia Global Brake & Chassis**

4400 Prime Parkway  
McHenry, IL 60050  
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815.759.7812 fax

June 16, 2011

Claude H. Harris  
Acting Associate Administrator for Enforcement  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590  
Attn: Recall Management Division

**Re: Defect Notification Pursuant to Part 573**

Dear Mr. Smith:

Affinia Group, Inc., on behalf its Affinia Global Brake & Chassis division, submits this defect notification in accordance with 49 CFR § 573.6. Due to a catalogue interchange error, certain aftermarket ball joints marketed by Affinia and sold to aftermarket customers through the NAPA channel on or after February 8, 2011 could have been installed in vehicles for which they were not designed.

**Identification of Affected Products and Customers**

This recall involves aftermarket front suspension lower ball joints, NAPA Part No. 2601662, that were distributed by NAPA on or after February 8, 2011.

**Total Number of Items Potentially Involved**

Affinia cannot estimate the number of parts, if any, that may have been installed (incorrectly) in MY2004-2008 Acura TL vehicles as opposed to the other two vehicle applications for which this part was correctly specified. Shipping records indicate that approximately 150 parts were shipped to NAPA since February 8, 2011. Affinia is recalling all parts that remain in dealer/distributor inventory and removing the part number from its catalogue and interchange database to avoid further misapplications.

**Description of Defect**

The subject parts are intended as replacement equipment for MY 2003 – 2007 Honda Accord and MY 2004 - 2008 Acura TSX vehicles. Due to an application catalogue error, Affinia communicated incorrect part interchange information (MY2004 – 2008 Acura TL) for the subject part number to Affinia's customer, NAPA. As a consequence, NAPA's parts catalogue database contained incorrect vehicle application information for this part beginning February 8, 2011. Because of this error, an installer could potentially misapply this part.

The stud nut in the Part No. 2601662 ball joint package is of insufficient diameter at the flange for the Acura TL application. Installation of the part on this vehicle could lead to separation of the ball joint and suspension collapse.



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The erroneous interchange information was corrected in NAPA's electronic catalogue as of May 24, 2011, but some NAPA dealers may continue to be using paper catalogs that contain the incorrect vehicle application/interchange information. Therefore, out of an abundance of caution, Affinia will remove all inventories of this part from NAPA inventory and replace it with the two new part numbers listed below.

**Chronology of Events**

On February 7, 2011, Affinia received an application update for Part No. 2601662 from its supplier. The update indicated that this part could be used as replacement equipment on MY 2004 – 2008 Acura TL vehicles.

On February 8, 2011, this update was submitted to NAPA.

On February 17, 2011, Affinia received notice to remove the Acura TL application for Part No. 2601662 and Affinia immediately removed the application from its electronic catalogue.

On May 5, 2011, Affinia received a claim report for vehicle damage due to a Part No. 2601662 ball joint separation from a lower control arm.

May 24, 2011 Affinia learned that the electronic notice submitted on Feb 17 was not processed by NAPA. Affinia re-communicated the application error to NAPA and NAPA removed the Acura TL interchange from its systems. All Part No. 2601662 ball joints were put on hold at all Affinia distributions centers.

On June 1, 2011, Affinia obsoleted (i.e., removed) NAPA Part No. 2601662 from its system to prevent the incorrect interchange information from being accessed or referenced in the future. Affinia replaced this part number with two new part numbers, Part No. 2601797 for the Acura TSX and Honda Accord applications, and Part No. 2601791 for the Acura TL application. Part No. 2601791 includes the nut fastener with the correct diameter at the flange for the Acura TL application.

On June 9, 2011, based on its investigation of this issue and an evaluation of the potential consequences of a misapplication, Affinia decided that a safety defect exists when this part is installed on the Acura TL vehicles.

Affinia received one report of a ball joint failure on an Acura TL vehicle (as noted above) and no reports of injuries or fatalities as a result of this issue.

**Description of Remedy Program**

Affinia Group will recall all parts that remain in dealer/distributor inventory. Affinia will also work with NAPA to identify any consumers that have had this part installed on Acura TL vehicles due to the interchange error, and replace the part free of charge.



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**Pre-Notification Remedy Reimbursement Program**

Pursuant to Part 577.11(e), Affinia requests an exemption from the pre-notification remedy reimbursement requirements. All of the recalled parts are still covered by the manufacturer's limited warranty.

**Dealer and Owner Notification**

Affinia has notified NAPA about this issue and NAPA has quarantined all of the subject products in its distribution centers. In addition, Affinia will issue the enclosed Product Bulletin to NAPA for distribution to NAPA dealers on or before June 24, 2011. Affinia will work with NAPA to attempt to identify and contact affected owners. Owner notification will occur as affected vehicle owners (if any) are identified. A draft Part 577 owner letter is enclosed for your review.

Please advise the undersigned of the campaign number assigned to this recall.

Sincerely,

Wally Marciniak  
Director Technical Service  
Affinia Under Vehicle Group  
815-759-7778

Enclosures (Dealer Product Alert and Draft Part 577 Owner Letter)

cc: Ms. Kelly Schuler, NHTSA ODI (via email)  
Christopher H. Grigorian, Esq. (Foley & Lardner LLP)