

Safety Defect and Noncompliance Report Guide for Equipment**PART 573 Defect and Noncompliance Report**Date: March 22, 2013

This report serves as **Hitch-Hiker Mfg., Inc.** notification to the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that a defect related to motor vehicle safety exists in certain GKN axles. Hitch-Hiker Mfg., Inc. decided that this defect existed in these vehicles on March 18, 2013.

I. Manufacturer, Designated Agent, and Other Chain of Distribution InformationManufacturer's corporate name: Hitch-Hiker Mfg., Inc.Equipment's brand or trademark name owner(s) (where applicable): N/ADesignated Agent (imported equipment): N/A

If this notification concerns equipment that was installed in new motor vehicles or new items of motor vehicle equipment, identify by name, address, and telephone number each vehicle manufacturer and equipment manufacturer who purchased that equipment:

N/A

If this notification concerns a defective or noncompliant component that the above identified manufacturer did not manufacture, identify that component and provide the name, address, and phone number of the manufacturer of the component (if this manufacturer is unknown, provide this information as to the supplier of the component):

GKN Armstrong Wheels, Inc.
712-864-7390 – Contact: Larry Olson Quality Assurance Mngr.
5453 6th Ave.
P.O. Box 48
Armstrong, Iowa 50514 USA
Phone 712-864-3202
Fax 712-864-7413

Name, address, email, and phone and fax numbers for the person(s) to whom inquiries about this report should be directed:

Hitch-Hiker Mfg., Inc.

Jeff Swartz – President
10065 Rapp Rd.
New Middletown, OH 44442
Hitch-HikerMfg@gmail.com
Phone 330-542-3052
Fax 330-542-9260

Holly Swartz – Vice President

HollySwartz@gmail.com

Manufacturer's assigned campaign number (where applicable): N/A

II. Identification of the Recall Population and Its Size

Complete the tables below for each item of equipment subject to this notification. Additional tables may be necessary where there are more than three items subject to a notification.

Type of equipment (e.g., tire, child restraint, headlamp): GKN axle

Part/Model number: 7800243-0745C

Size and function (where applicable): 8000# axle

Inclusive dates of manufacture (month and year): 9-9-2008 to 6-18-2010

Other information necessary to describe this equipment:

Total number of these items of equipment: 33 axles

Provide the following information as to all the items of equipment ("the recall population") identified above:

Grand total number of items of equipment in the recall population: 33

The percentage of the recall population you estimate actually contain the defect or Noncompliance: 100%

Identify and describe how the recall population was determined (e.g., on what basis the recalled models were selected and how the inclusive dates of manufacture were determined):

This accounts for 100% of axles purchased from GKN and those were the dates purchased. These axles are specific to a particular size and style of trailer that our company manufactures and are the only style axle we use from the GKN Company.

Describe how the recall population is different from any similar items of equipment not subject to this notification:

These are a different axle and company from any other type axle we use. We use various axles from other vendors.

III. Description of the Defect or Noncompliance and Chronology of Events

Describe the defect or noncompliance, including a summary and detailed description of the nature and physical location (if appropriate) of the defect or noncompliance. Graphic aids should be provided where necessary.

On either side of the trailer, where the axle bar (part going from one side to the other) connects to an arm that moves up and down providing the suspension of the axle. This arm then connects to the spindle, hub, then wheel and tire. This is breaking at the end of the axle bar, separating the arm, spindle, hub, wheel and tire.

Jan 2011, First broken axle reported to GKN, was concluded it could have been customer induced, and GKN issued a RGA for the axle and issued a refund check.

Jan 2011, Second Bent axle, reported and warranty refund.

July 2011, Third Axle, reported, raised further concern of larger issue, and then warranty and refund was issued.

Hitch-Hiker had then replaced several axles to a new vendors replacement style that was supplied to a new vendor.

The previous axles were also all changed to a new vendors axle as replacement.

These axles were kept at Hitch-Hikers facility for inspection by GKN at an undetermined date to further review if this is a customer induced issue, or a more serious problem.

September 2012, Photos were sent to GKN for their review and direction.

March 2013, we have recently had a report of another axle failing in the same manor and have initiated this filing.

This has been over a two-year span.

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

Undetermined

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

Tire, wheel, and hub separating from the trailer.

Identify any warning(s) that may precede the defect or noncompliance condition.

Undetermined

For defects, provide a dated, chronological summary of all the principle events that were the basis for the determination that the defect is related to motor vehicle safety, including a summary of all warranty claims, field or service reports, and other information such as numbers of crashes, injuries and fatalities.

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September 2012, Photos were sent to GKN for their review and direction.

March 18, 2013, we had a report of an axle failing in the same manor above and resulted in an accident with another vehicle that resulted in some minor injuries.

For noncompliance's, identify the test results and other information considered in determining the existence of the noncompliance, and provide the date of each test and observation indicative of that noncompliance.

N/A

IV. The Remedy Program and Its Schedule

Describe the program for remedying the defect or noncompliance, including the plan for reimbursing those owners and purchasers who may have incurred costs to remedy the defect or noncompliance before receiving the manufacturer's notification concerning that defect or noncompliance. Also include, where applicable, details with dates concerning any production remedy that was conducted or will be conducted.

Hitch-Hiker Mfg has voluntarily replaced several trailers with a new vendors axle at our expense. With the exception of GKN offering Warranty pro rated refunds.

Provide the estimated date(s) on which owner and purchaser notifications will be issued and the estimated date(s) for completion of those notifications.

As soon as possible. Contacting end customers has already been initiated.
There are only 6 current trailers in need of replacement.

Provide the estimated date(s) on which dealer and distributor notifications will be issued and the estimated date(s) for completion of those notifications.

N/A

Describe the distinguishing characteristics of the remedy component/assembly versus the recalled component/assembly.

Different axle supplier using different product, methods and materials.

***** IMPORTANT REMINDERS *****

A DRAFT version of the letter that the manufacturer intends to mail to owners and purchasers notifying them of the defect and/or noncompliance must be submitted to NHTSA at least five Federal Government business days before those letters are issued. In addition, it is recommended that the draft version of the letter that the manufacturer intends to send to its dealers and distributors concerning the defect and/or noncompliance also be submitted for review. For prompt receipt and review, drafts may be submitted to the attention of the Recall Management Division (NVS-215) via facsimile on (202) 366-7882, or email to RMD.ODI@dot.gov.

A representative 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, dealer, or purchaser, must be submitted to NHTSA no later than five days after they are initially sent. This requirement applies both to the final version of the notification letter that is sent to owners and purchasers, as well as the final version that is sent to dealers and distributors. It also includes any follow-up notifications issued concerning a recall. The representative copies of the letters sent to owners and purchasers, and dealers and distributors, must be submitted via certified mail. It is strongly recommended, however, that additional representative copies be submitted via facsimile on (202) 366-7882, or email to RMD.ODI@dot.gov, so that the submission can be more promptly reviewed. All submissions should be conspicuously labeled with the appropriate NHTSA-assigned recall number.