



RECEIVED

By Recall Management Division at 9:30 am, Oct 17, 2013

September 30, 2013

Ms. Nancy Lewis
Associate Administrator for Enforcement
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington DC 20590

Dear Ms. Lewis,

In accordance with the requirements of CFR 49 Part 573.6 Blue Bird Corporation is submitting the attached defect report.

This report was emailed to Kelly Schuler at NHTSA on September 30, 2013.

If you should have any questions concerning the information submitted, please contact me at 478-822-2242.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bill Coleman".

Bill Coleman
Corporate Recall Administrator

Enclosure:

49 CFR Part 573.6 Defect Report for Recall R13WN Sure Power Battery Equalizer Recall

BLUE BIRD BODY COMPANY

P.O. Box 937 – 402 Blue Bird Blvd – Fort Valley, Georgia – (478) 825-2021



BLUE BIRD

49 CFR, PART 573.6 Defect and Noncompliance Reporting

Initial Defect Report

Report Date: September 30, 2013

1. Vehicles affected are manufactured by:

Blue Bird Corporation
P. O. Box 937
Fort Valley, GA 31030

2. Component manufacturer:

The defective component (battery equalizer) was manufactured by:

Sure Power Inc.
10189 SW Avery Street
Tualatin, OR 97062
800-845-6269

3. The following vehicles are being recalled:

Certain Blue Bird commercial series non-school buses manufactured as indicated below:

74 Blue Bird 2004 model year Ultra LMB model commercial buses delivered from June 19, 2003 through March 28, 2006.

186 Blue Bird 2003 through 2006 model year Ultra LF model commercial buses delivered from March 14, 2003 through April 01, 2008.

92 Blue Bird 2004 through 2007 model year Express model commercial buses delivered from September 27, 2003 through May 19, 2007.

41 Sure Power, Inc. battery equalizers sold through Blue Bird Aftermarket Parts Sales from July 15, 2005 through February 08, 2011.

4. The total number of vehicles recalled potentially containing the defect are:

352 Commercial series buses

5. The approximate percentage of the total number of vehicles estimated to actually contain the defect is:

Unknown

6. The defect consists of:

According to Sure Power Inc notification documents to Blue Bird, the specific potting compound used in the subject products for insulation was found to be capable of conducting electricity once exposed to significant thermal energy. Once electrically conductive, the material is capable of self-heating and maintaining temperatures capable of accelerating a thermal incident. Thermal energy can be sourced by various electrical failures, and Sure Power advises it is still investigating whether there are application-specific contributions to the risk of failure. Sure Power advises electrical failures have been traced to water intrusion or solder joint fatigue resulting from ongoing expansion and contraction due to thermal cycling.

Sure Power confirms incidents to date have demonstrated smoking or flame at the affected part with additional damage limited to adjacent/connected parts such as wire harness and cables. No injuries have been reported to date. The failure mechanism is not detectable and no warning is given prior to a thermal event. Blue Bird is not aware of any incidents of this condition occurring on its products.

7. The following data is the basis for the determination of the defect.

On September 12, 2013 Blue Bird received notification from Sure Power Inc. that Sure Power is recalling the subject battery equalizers manufactured between January, 2000 and August, 2013.

Subsequent review of Blue Bird commercial series bus orders found the subject Sure Power battery equalizers were installed on the Blue Bird commercial model buses identified in Section 3. The buses identified were equipped with a split 12/24 volt electrical system which required a battery equalizer.

On September 24, 2013 Blue Bird decided to conduct a recall campaign to correct this defect on the affected commercial model buses.

8. The defect will be corrected in the following manner:

Blue Bird and Sure Power Inc. will replace all affected battery equalizers installed on the subject Blue Bird commercial bus models at no charge to the bus owner. Battery equalizers sold through aftermarket sales will also be replaced at no charge.

9. Notification will be as follows:

Dealer notification is scheduled to begin on or about November 28, 2013.
Owner notification is scheduled to begin on or about November 28, 2013.
Parts are anticipated to be available through Sure power Inc. at time of notification.

10. Blue Bird's identification number assigned to this recall is:

R13WN

11. Dealer and Owner Notification:

A draft copy of the notification documents will be submitted to NHTSA for review prior to mailing.

Questions regarding this recall should be directed to:

William P. Coleman
Corporate Recall Administrator
Blue Bird Corporation
P.O. Box 937
Fort Valley GA 31030
(478) 822-2242

Signed: _____

William P. Coleman

William P. Coleman, Corporate Recall Administrator