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By Recall Management Division at 12:32 pm, Apr 24, 2014



The First Name In Trailers

April 24, 2014

Via FedEx

NHTSA - Associate Administrator for Enforcement
Office of Defects Investigation, Defects Div. NVS-211
1200 New Jersey Ave. S.E.
Washington, DC. 20590

Dear Recipient:

As required by Federal Regulation 49 CFR Part 573; we are submitting the enclosed following communiqués.

- **Part 573 Defect and Noncompliance Report**
- **SB-08-169: Safety Recall & INSPECTION - Factory Installed Wheel Ends**

Respectfully submitted,

Blas Gonzalez, Regional Manager
Field Service Department
Utility Trailer Manufacturing Company

PART 573 Defect and Noncompliance Report³

On **April 17, 2014**, Utility Trailer Manufacturing Co. determined that a condition that may relate to motor vehicle safety may exist in the motor vehicles listed below, and is furnishing notification to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in accordance with 49 CFR Part 573 **Defect and Noncompliance Reports**.

Date this report was prepared: **April 22, 2013**

Furnish the manufacturer's identification code for this recall (if applicable): **SB-08-169**, manufacturer of the recalled component.

1. Identify the full corporate name of the fabricating manufacturer of the vehicle being recalled. If the recalled vehicle is imported, provide the name and mailing address of the designated agent as prescribed by 49 U.S.C. §30164.

UTILITY TRAILER MANUFACTURING COMPANY
17295 E. RAILROAD STREET
CITY OF INDUSTRY, CALIFORNIA 91748

Identify the corporate official, by name and title, whom the agency should contact with respect to this recall.

Sal Molina, Manager
Field Service Department
Utility Trailer Manufacturing Company

Telephone Number: **626-854-7215**

Fax Number: **626-965-5660**

Name and Title of Person who prepared this report.

Blas Gonzalez
Regional Field Service Manager
Field Service Department

Signed: _____

³ Each manufacturer must furnish a report, to the Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance, for each defect or noncompliance condition, which relates to motor vehicle safety.

This guide was developed from 49 CFR Part 573, "Defect and Noncompliance Reports" and also outlines information currently requested. Any questions please consult the complete Part 573 or contact Mr. Jon White at (202) 366-5227 or by FAX at (202) 366-7882.

I. Identify the Vehicle Models Involved in the Recall

2. **Identify the Vehicles Involved in the Recall, for each make and model or applicable vehicle line (provide illustrations or photographs as necessary to describe the vehicle, provide:**

Make(s): UTILITY Model Years Involved: 2015 Model(s): as follows: Refrigerated Vans
(Single axle, dual axle and tri-axle, commercial, semi refrigerated vans)

Production Dates: Beginning: January 6, 2014 Ending: March 14, 2014

VIN Range: Beginning: 1UY VS2530FU115909 Ending: 1UYVS1295FU146303

Descriptive information which characterizes/distinguishes the recall vehicles from those model vehicles not included in the recall: **The wheel-ends of the recalled trailers may be out of specification with too little wheel-end play resulting from an over-tightened axle nut; an inspection is necessary to determine if a particular trailer's wheel-ends are affected.**

Identify the approximate percentage of the production of all the recalled models manufactured by your company between the inclusive dates of manufacture provided above, that the recalled model population represents. For example, if the involved Widgets equipped with certain items of equipment from January 1, 1997, then what was the percentage of the recalled Widgets of all Widgets manufactured during that time period. 21.5 %

II. Identify the Recall Population

3. **Furnish the total number of vehicles recalled potentially containing the defect or noncompliance.**

Model	Year	Number of Vehicles Potentially Involved
<u>VS1RA</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>VS2RA</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>492</u>
<u>VS3RA</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>11</u>

Total Number Potentially Affected by the Recall: 507

4. Furnish the approximate percentage of the total number of vehicles estimated to actually contain the defect of noncompliance: 100%

Identify and describe how the recall population was determined – in particular how the recalled models were selected and the basis for the beginning and final dates of manufacture of the recalled vehicles:

Utility determined that axle nuts could have been over tightened when Utility's automated wheel-end machine was combined with manually tightening the axle nut. During the relevant period, Utility sought to tighten the axle nuts such that the wheel-end play met a spec of between .001 and .005, per TMC RP 618A. This specification was attained by having automated machine perform a precise bearing adjustment by applying torque to the axle nut (which secures the entire wheel end together and reduces bearing wheel-end play), followed by a manual adjustment. Between January 6 -27, the manual function deviated from the standard procedure, with the result that the axle nuts could have been over tightened. On January 27, Utility replaced its procedure with a completed automated procedure, which eliminated any variability in achieving the required wheel end play that resulted from the manual part of the process. The completed automated procedure, implemented on January 27, eliminated the risk of over tightening the axle nut and having wheel-end play that was not within specification.

Those trailers with wheel ends manufactured between January 6th and 27th 2014 are the subject of this notice. These wheel-ends were incorporated into trailers manufactured between January 6, and March 14, 2014.

III. Describe the Defect or Non Compliance

5. Describe the defect or noncompliance. The defect should address the nature and physical location of the defect or noncompliance. Illustrations should be provided as appropriate.

Utility has determined that it may have manually over tightened axle nuts on wheel-end assemblies manufactured in its Utah factory between January 6-27 as it attempted to achieve bearing wheel end play between .001 and .005. In these instances, the end play could be out of specification, and an inspection / bearing wheel end adjustment is authorized if applicable.

- Describe the cause(s) of the defect:

Between January 6th and 27th 2014, the manual-adjustment portion of its procedure to achieve wheel-end play of between .001 and .005 may have been performed incorrectly. Utility eliminated the manual-adjustment portion of the procedure on January 27, and wheel-end assemblies manufactured after that time are in specification.

- Describe the consequence(s) of the defect or noncompliance condition:

Out-of-specification bearing wheel-end play can lead to bearing failure.

- Identify any warning, which can (a) precede or (b) occur.

Trailers equipped with thermal wheel-end monitors will alert the tractor driver of a overheated bearings during a pre trip inspection or while the tractor trailer is on the road. If a wheel end monitor is not affixed to a wheel end, stiff wheel bearing rotation and bearing failure can occur.

- If the defect or noncompliance is in a component or assembly purchased from a supplier, identify the supplier by corporate name and address. N/A
- Identify the name and title of the chief executive officer or knowledgeable representative of the supplier: N/A

IV. Provide the Chronology in Determining the Defect/Noncompliance

If the recall is for a defect, complete item 6, otherwise item 7.

6. With respect to a defect, furnish a chronological summary (including dates) of all principle events that were the basis for the determination of the defect. The summary should include, but not be limited to, the number of reports, accidents, injuries, fatalities, and warranty claims.

In March 2014, Utility received a series of notifications from its customer that the thermal wheel-end monitor had tripped on one or more wheel ends, alerting the tractor-trailer driver of a potentially over-heated wheel bearing. These notifications were on eleven trailers all manufactured for the same customer in Utility's Utah plant

Utility then carried out an investigation to determine the cause of the failure and to ascertain the extent of the defect, whether related components were damaged, and other variables. Utility's investigation determined that there was no problem with the thermal wheel-end monitors. It also excluded operative error in activating the monitor, as well as lack of maintenance. Utility determined that the wheel-end play on the trailers those trailers that had been the subject of the customer notifications were out of specification. Utility also determined that not all wheel ends produced during that time were out of specification, and that it saw no evidence of damage to the bearings or other wheel-end components on the affected trailers

No accidents, injuries, or fatalities occurred or were reported.

Utility has not received any reports involving trailer(s) with wheel ends not equipped with thermal wheel-end monitors. As part of a precautionary measure, Utility is adding these units to the quantity of trailers involved in this inspection since they were built using the same bearing wheel-end adjustment procedure as the wheel ends equipped with wheel-end monitors.

On April 18, 2014, Utility initiated a recall inspection and bearing adjustment as applicable while simultaneously upgrading the inspection to a safety campaign.

As part of its recall, Utility sent a Service Directive to its dealer network for the purpose of expediting the inspection and the adjustment, if applicable, on those specific trailers. Utility believes that the affected trailers were sold only to these dealers / end users.

7. With respect to a noncompliance, identify and provide the test results or other data (in chronological order and including dates) on which the noncompliance was determined.

See # 6.

V. Identify the Remedy

8. Furnish a description of the manufacturer's remedy for the defect of non-compliance. Clearly describe the difference between the recall condition and the remedy.
 - a. **Inspect the bearing wheel-end play using a dial indicator to measure end play between .001 and .005; Utility authorizes its dealer network to reset bearing wheel-end play if measured outside of the specified wheel-end-play tolerance.**
 - b. **Refer to the attached copy: SB-08-169 – Safety Recall & and Inspection – Factory Installed Wheel Ends**

Clearly describe the distinguishing characteristics of the remedy component/assembly versus the recalled component/assembly.

The recalled trailers may wheel-end play that is not within the specification of .001 - .005. Utility has authorized an inspection of all recalled trailers to determine whether the wheel-end play is within specification. If it is not, the specification will be adjusted manually by Utility's authorized dealers, and the remedied trailers will have end play within the specification of .001 - .005.

Identify and describe how and when the recall condition was corrected in production. If the production remedy was identical to the recall remedy in the field, so state. If the product was discontinued, so state.

No trailers with wheel-ends manufactured in Utah after January 27th received bearing wheel end play adjustment procedures with both automated and manual functions. Only automated functions are performed in the plant. The fully automated procedure ensures that the wheel-end play is within specification and the axle nuts are not over tightened.

VI. Identify the Recall Schedule

Furnish a schedule or agenda (with specific dates) for notification to other manufacturers, dealers/retailers, and purchasers. Please identify any foreseeable problems with implementing the recall.

Utility does not intend to send another notification to dealers or end users as this has already been completed. Utility intends to monitor until all identified trailers have been inspected / adjusted.

VII. Furnish Recall Communications

9. Furnish a final copy of all notices, bulletins, and other communications that relate directly to the defect of noncompliance and which are sent to more than one manufacturer, distributor, or purchaser. This includes all communications (including both original and follow-up) concerning this recall from the time your company determines the defect or noncompliance condition on, not just the initial notification. *A DRAFT copy of the notification document should be submitted to this office by Fax (202-366-7882) for review prior to mailing.*

Note that these documents are to be submitted separately from those provided in accordance with Part 573.8 requirements.