

Chronology of Defect / Noncompliance Determination**573.6 (c) (6) (7)**

Describe the chronology of events leading up to the defect decision or test data for the noncompliance decision: (2000)

Isuzu introduced a newly designed F-Series truck to the U.S. market in June, 2017. As with previous Isuzu trucks, the F-Series includes a feature allowing the cab to be unlocked and tilted forward to allow for access beneath the cab for service and maintenance. To unlock the cab, a rod must be pulled towards the operator with one hand while the other hand pulls down on a lever. Once the cab is unlocked, the operator can tilt the cab forward and lock it into place in the tilted position. When service or maintenance is complete, the operator pulls the cab downward. An assist hook on the cab will engage a bar attached to the frame, the purpose of which is to position the cab so that the locking mechanism will engage when the lever is pushed upward.

In April, 2018, Isuzu learned of an incident that had occurred at a dealer's premises in which the dealer's employee drove a vehicle which did not have a body about five miles to the refueling station. While making a right turn into the refueling station, the cab tilted forward. The cab stopped before contacting the ground and there was no injury associated with this incident. Isuzu personnel subsequently attempted to replicate the occurrence at the locale. They found the cab could tilt forward if left unlocked, particularly when the vehicle is driven on rough roads or in certain right turning maneuvers. Isuzu did not find any malfunction of the locking mechanism itself. The occurrence appeared to occur as the result of the cab not having been locked into place per the instructions.

Isuzu reviewed the original label and decided that the label could be improved to provide more graphic information to the operator as a reminder to push the locking lever fully to the locked position. Isuzu developed a new and additional label and introduced the label into new production as of August 29, 2018. Isuzu also added language to the owner's manual. Isuzu also reviewed other field data to determine whether there may have been any other indications that a cab was left unlocked. Isuzu found a warranty claim in which a driver had complained of rough driving conditions and the service facility found that the vehicle had been driven without the cab having been locked into place. In another, the vehicle was driven over 500 miles without the cab tilting forward. Isuzu has additionally reviewed its pre-production documentation. Isuzu found that a driver on a test drive reported hearing noise and found upon checking that he had forgotten to lock the cab into place. Isuzu also found an instance during an exercise to develop transportation protocols for the trucks in which a cab had been left unlocked, and had been loaded and unloaded onto the transporter numerous times. Eventually the unmanned cab was found tilting forward and then was locked into place.

Although there is no malfunction within the locking mechanism itself, the company considered that in its other vehicles the locking lever protrudes from beyond the side of the cab when the locking mechanism is unlocked so that it is visible to a driver during the pre-trip inspection, when walking outside the vehicle and from the vehicle's side view mirror. Isuzu determined that this protrusion appears to act as an additional warning to alert drivers that the cab has not been locked. Isuzu decided to develop an extension to the current locking lever to mirror the warning provided by other locking mechanism designs. After discussion with the agency, Isuzu decided to conduct a safety recall to implement this change on the subject vehicles already produced. Isuzu will also implement the change in the production of Model Year 2019 F-Series vehicles.