

Chronology of Defect / Noncompliance Determination

Provide the chronology of events leading up to the defect decision or test data for the noncompliance:

April 2016 – Subaru received the first field report regarding this condition on a 2016MY Forester. Subaru had received no field reports for 2015MY Forester vehicles. Service Information Bulletin 07-108-16 was released to the field containing a diagnostic procedure for 14-16MY Forester vehicle passenger seat cushions that may have been exposed to higher concentrations of liquid.

January 31, 2017 - Subaru received the first technical report alleging that the airbag warning light was illuminated with an occupant detection sensor mat DTC. Parts were collected and investigated, but no root cause was determined.

June - October, 2017 – By June 9, 2017, Subaru had received an additional 22 technical reports from the U.S. market. Since no root cause could be determined during investigation of the individual samples, Subaru and the supplier opened a joint investigation. Joint field inspections were conducted September 7 - 28, 2017. From the initial results of the joint field inspections, Subaru estimated that the air bag warning lamp was illuminated due to liquid, and therefore, the performance limitation of a capacitance sensor mat might be the main cause. Subaru and the supplier continued the joint investigation.

February – September, 2018 – Continued joint investigation results indicated other factors could cause connection instability such as harness connectors and/or harness routing. To improve robustness, in February 2018, the supplier updated the manufacturing process for the harness connection terminals. Subaru and the supplier continued the joint investigation.

August 22, 2018 - Service Information Bulletin 07-108-16R was revised to clarify the diagnostic procedure.

August 14, 2019 – Subaru received an Information Request from NHTSA (PE19-009).

September 26, 2019 - Subaru determined that the cause of failure was an intermittent and temporarily unstable connection between terminals of the ODS sensor mat harness connectors. Tracing the potentially affected vehicles with consideration of field occurrence frequency and vehicle production information, Subaru determined the potentially affected vehicle production range to be between January 20, 2015 and August 1, 2017. Of 237 potentially related dealer and non-dealer field reports for 15-18MY Forester vehicles, 233 describe vehicles produced within the production window identified and 232 describe vehicles equipped with heated seats. Subaru decided to conduct a voluntary safety recall. Subaru is not aware of any accidents or injuries related to this condition.