Nissan North America, Inc.
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August 13, 2020

Mr. Jeff Giuseppe
Associate Administrator for Enforcement
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Attn: Recall Management Division (NVS-215)
Room W48-302
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. Giuseppe:

We are transmitting the enclosed supplement to the Defect Information Report filed on May 28, 2020. This supplement updates section(s) 6 and 7: Chronology of Principal Events and Description of Corrective Action, respectively.

Very truly,

Derek Latta
Manager,
Technical Compliance

Encl.

DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT

1. Manufacturer:

Nissan North America, Inc.

2. Vehicles Potentially Involved:

Certain 2013-2018 Model Year Nissan Altima vehicles manufactured in the Smyrna, TN and Canton, MS plants from March 6, 2012 (start of production) to August 17, 2018 (end of production).

All vehicles subject to Recall 16V-029 are included in this recall population, including both those that did and did not receive the recall repair.

In addition, the subject vehicle range is expanded to include 2016-2018 Model Year Altima vehicles that contain the subject hood latch assembly.

This issue is unique to Model Year 2013-2018 Nissan Altima vehicles due to a combination of the model front end design, anti-corrosion limitations and location of the hood latch release in close proximity to the fuel door release. This issue does not affect any other Nissan or INFINITI vehicles.

3. Total Number of Vehicles Potentially Involved:

Approximately 1,831,818 Nissan Altima vehicles.

The recall population above includes 846,009 Nissan Altima vehicles that were subject to Recall 16V-029.

4. Percentage of Vehicles Estimated to Actually Contain the Defect:

100%

5. Description of the Defect:

Over time, build-up caused by driving with the primary hood latch disengaged allows excessive, corrosive contaminants to contact the hood latch assembly. This build-up, combined with a lack of proper inspection and maintenance of the secondary hood latch, can create mechanical binding that could cause the secondary hood latch to remain in the open position after it has been disengaged. In such cases, if the primary hood latch is inadvertently released (ex. while refueling) or the hood is not closed properly after engine service, the secondary hood latch may not hold the hood closed as designed while the vehicle is in motion. If this condition occurs, the hood may open without warning and obstruct the driver's forward view, increasing the risk of crash.

6. Chronology of Principal Events:

September 2014 - Nissan initiated Recall 14V-565 for MY2013 Nissan Altima vehicles manufactured during March 6, 2012 to February 28, 2013 due to potential interference between the hood inner panel and the secondary latch lever. This interference, in combination with debris and corrosion, could create mechanical binding that may cause the secondary hood latch to remain in the open position. Dealers were instructed to modify the bend angle of the hood actuation lever to eliminate the potential interference with the hood inner panel. In addition, dealers conditioned the latch joint with application of cleaner and lubricant as needed. If dealers identified significant corrosion, the latch assembly was replaced.

January 2015 to March 2015 - Nissan received reports of incidents involving vehicles outside the 14V-565 recall population range. Initial investigation of the returned hood latches indicated potential incorrect anti-corrosion coating thickness. Analysis of the returned hood latches and the supplier manufacturing process confirmed that the previous Tier 3 supplier's application of anti-corrosion coating could create a condition that could lead to mechanical binding. Under certain conditions, the binding could cause the secondary hood latch to remain in the open position.

Nissan initiated Recall 15V-116 on all MY2013-2015 Nissan Altima vehicles equipped with the subject latch assembly, manufactured during March 1, 2013 to December 31, 2014. Dealers were instructed to inspect and lubricate the secondary hood latch assembly, and to replace the latch assembly if the dealer identified significant corrosion.

March 2015 to January 2016 – Nissan continued to monitor the effectiveness of the previous campaign repairs in the field and further consider their long-term robustness. Based on engineering judgment, Nissan decided to recall all vehicles equipped with the affected hood latch assembly to replace the latch with a countermeasure part that had improved anti-corrosion coating. Recall 16V-029, consolidated the affected vehicle populations of the 14V-565 and 15V-116 recalls and superseded them. The 16V-029 recall included vehicles that had already received the previous remedy.

December 2018 to April 2019 – Nissan became aware of a field incident that reportedly involved hood latch corrosion on a post-remedy (Recall 16V-029) vehicle. Nissan immediately launched an investigation into the issue. Nissan collected the subject hood latch, which showed signs of heavy corrosion on the secondary latch mechanism. Later investigation determined that Recall 16V-029 remained open on this vehicle, and it did not have the replacement latch repair performed.

Nissan's continuing investigation identified additional warranty claims involving reported latch replacement post-remedy completion (Recall 16V-029). Nissan initiated a warranty parts collection activity for post-countermeasure production vehicles and post-remedy (Recall 16V-029) vehicles and worked together with the supplier to investigate the returned parts. However, the results of the initial supplier testing were inconclusive.

May 2019 through January 2020 – Nissan initiated a second, more extensive, parts collection activity for post countermeasure production vehicles and post-remedy (Recall 16V-019) vehicles in both salt regions and non-salt regions to locate hood latches that exhibited excessive corrosion and binding of the secondary latch mechanism. This action included not only warranty parts return but also collecting a significant number of parts from the field to investigate the surface coating condition.

Nissan worked extensively with Altima customers to locate and organize scramble opportunities to inspect latches with heavy corrosion that matched the subject condition of Recall 16V-029. Nissan collected thirteen (13) parts from the field scramble that appeared to show corrosion on the secondary latch mechanism. Of these parts, four (4) had the previous recall (16V-029) repair performed.

Overall, 110 latches were collected for analysis, 53 of which were reported as hood opening while driving. Nissan's initial analysis showed heavy corrosion on thirty-six (36) of the parts. Ten (10) of the corroded parts were not stuck. The twenty-six (26) corroded parts reviewed with a "stuck" secondary latch mechanism included both pre-countermeasure and post-countermeasure parts (anti-corrosion coating condition was sufficient).

Nissan continued to review scramble investigation activity results to determine why the collected post-countermeasure latches with improved corrosion coating were exhibiting heavy corrosion.

February 2020 through May 2020 – Findings from the vehicle scramble reviews combined with analysis of returned parts revealed that inadvertent release of the primary hood latch played a role in the heavy corrosion of the hood latch mechanism. If the primary hood latch is inadvertently released (e.g. while refueling), build-up caused by driving with the primary hood latch disengaged allows excessive, corrosive contaminants to contact the secondary hood latch assembly. Without proper maintenance, there is an increased likelihood that the secondary hood latch may corrode even with adequate post-countermeasure anti-corrosion coating.

May 20, 2020 - Although Nissan was not aware of any injuries or fatalities attributed to this condition for those customers who received a Recall 16V-029 repair or were outside of the Recall 16V-029 population, based on the additional findings obtained through the scrambles and field collection activities and analysis, Nissan decided to conduct this safety recall campaign. This final recall remedy was still under development.

7. Description of Corrective Action:

A remedy plan is currently under development. Nissan re-notified all affected owners (including those that received the previous remedy under Recall 16V-029) beginning on July 14, 2020 and concluding on July 27, 2020. The interim notification instructed owners how to properly maintain the latch per the Owner's Manual general maintenance requirements and included a reminder to fully close and engage the primary hood latch each time before driving. Dealers were notified on June 2, 2020.

8. Copy of Notices:

Copies of all notices will be provided to NHTSA as they become available.