

Chronology of Defect

Steering wheel logo may shatter during air bag deployment on MY 2004 through MY2007 Mazda3

September, 2015: Mazda received first field report of “The occupant injured face by scattered fragments of the logo when the air bag is activated in a crash” from outside the US market.

December, 2015 through February, 2016: The part supplier and Mazda started to investigate the root cause. Hydrolysis was confirmed to occur on the broken logo which was made of polyurethane. The hydrolysis was hypothesized to accelerate deterioration of the logo and reduce its strength.

February, 2016: As a result of high heat and humidity durability test, the molar weight of the logo was found to be reduced, which indicated the hydrolysis was duplicated in the polyurethane sample.

March, 2016: It was found that the supplier made a change to the material of the logo, from polyurethane to polyester in June, 2006. This material change was intended to improve the logo appearance. As a result of later investigation, the hydrolysis was confirmed to not occur on logo made of polyester. This material change was also found to incidentally be a corrective measure for subsequently produced vehicles.

April, 2016: Mazda found that the logos for other vehicle models were not made of polyurethane, which may be subject to hydrolysis. Accordingly, there is no possibility for this defect to occur on other vehicle models.

January, 2017: Mazda determined at this time that the projected fragments could only cause superficial damage or injury and the safety risk was low because the plastic fragments are very light in mass. Up to this time, considering the occurrence rate of collisions necessitating air bag deployments in the field, Mazda had estimated the occurrence rate of this defect in the field would be low.

February, 2017: Mazda judged that the degree of injury caused by this concern was equivalent to the type of injury that can occur during a normal air bag deployment in a crash. Accordingly, Mazda decided to monitor any field occurrences.

June, 2018; Mazda received second field report of “The occupant injured the arm by scattered fragments of the logo when the air bag was activated in a crash” from outside the US market.

August, 2018: Mazda received third field report of “The occupant injured the face by scattered fragments of the logo when the air bag was activated in a crash” from outside the US market.

December, 2018: Mazda received fourth field report of “The occupant injured the face by scattered fragments of the logo when the air bag was activated in a crash” from outside the US market.

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February, 2019: Mazda and the parts supplier investigated the second to fourth returned parts. Based on the investigation result, the root cause was similar to that of the first reported field incident which occurred in September, 2015. Mazda judged that the occurrence rate was low.

March, 2019: Mazda received the fifth field report, which reported “The occupant injured left eye by projectile fragments of the logo when the air bag was activated” from outside the US market.

May, 2019: Mazda attempted to collect parts to examine the material condition of the logo, but no parts could be recovered for analysis. Mazda decided to continue monitoring any occurrences in the field in an attempt to gather further information.

July, 2019: Mazda received sixth field report of “The occupant injured eye by projectile fragments of the logo when the air bag was activated” from outside the US market. Mazda subsequently received a seventh field report of “The occupant injured face by projectile fragments of the logo when the air bag was activated” from outside the US market. At this time U.S. lawsuits alleging injury possibly caused by this defect were received.

August, 2019: Mazda received tenth field report of “The occupant injured face by projectile fragments of the logo when the air bag was activated” from outside the US market.

September, 2019; As Mazda received the fifth through tenth field concerns and law suits, Mazda decided to continue monitoring occurrences in the field because sufficient information and part analysis was still unavailable.

November, 2019: As a precaution in case it was judged that proactive field actions may be necessary in foreign markets, Mazda began to prepare the air bag module cover as a replacement part.

June, 2021: Mazda has received no field reports since the tenth field incident globally. However, considering the nature of the defect’s root cause, Mazda was concerned about a possible increase in injury cases caused by this defect in the future. Accordingly, Mazda has decided to judge whether to take proactive field actions.

June 25, 2021: Eight field incidents have been reported as a result of this defect outside the US, and two US lawsuits were received alleging injury. Mazda held a Quality Audit Committee meeting to review all available information to date. Out of an abundance of caution, Mazda has determined to conduct a proactive field action on certain MY2004 through MY2007 Mazda3 vehicles in the US and US Territories.

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August 27, 2021: Mazda met with NHTSA-RMD on August 3 2021 to explain a change in the recall schedule due to an unexpected change in parts availability. As advised by the agency, Mazda is submitting this amended report to revise the recall schedule to include a phased parts available launch in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.
