

- ATTENTION:**
- GENERAL MANAGER
  - PARTS MANAGER
  - CLAIMS PERSONNEL
  - SERVICE MANAGER

IMPORTANT - All Service Personnel Should Read and Initial in the boxes provided, right.


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QUALITY DRIVEN® SERVICE

**PRODUCT CAMPAIGN BULLETIN**

**APPLICABILITY:** 2015 Subaru Outback  
**SUBJECT:** 2015 Outback Accessory Trailer Hitch Assembly

**NUMBER:** WQN-50  
**DATE:** October 2014  
**NHTSA ID:** 14V-577

Subaru of America, Inc. (SOA) has determined that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety, exists on certain 2015 Outback vehicles equipped with a genuine Subaru accessory trailer hitch assembly, part number L101SAL010. There may have been a mounting issue during installation of the affected accessory trailer hitch assemblies.

**AFFECTED VEHICLES**

There are approximately 56 potentially affected 2015 model year Outback vehicles, produced between 1/22/2014 and 8/18/2014. These vehicles are equipped with a genuine Subaru accessory hitch assembly, specifically part number L101SAL010.

The affected vehicles were identified from port installation records, and from parts sales records to retailers along with the installation information (VIN) provided by those retailers. Vehicle coverage for this recall must be confirmed by using the Vehicle Coverage Inquiry function on subarunet.com. This data will be available when owner notification begins.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE SAFETY DEFECT AND SAFETY HAZARD**

Mounting nuts included in the accessory trailer hitch assembly are used to affix the trailer hitch to eight separate threaded studs welded to the body of the affected vehicles. SOA has determined that there may have been a mounting issue when installing the affected accessory trailer hitch assemblies. As a result, the installer may have underestimated the amount of torque being applied to the mounting nuts. Excessive tightening of the mounting nuts may, in turn, damage the threaded studs on the vehicle.

If excessive tightening of the mounting nuts occurred during installation of the accessory trailer hitch assembly, the mounting nuts may not provide sufficient force to remain attached to the threaded studs or the threaded studs might break. If either of those conditions is experienced while a trailer is being towed, the driver might not be able to operate the vehicle as desired or the trailer may detach from the vehicle. Either situation could possibly result in a crash.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE REMEDY**

Retailers will replace all eight (8) mounting nuts for the accessory trailer hitch assembly. Also, the retailers will inspect all eight (8) threaded studs for damage and determine whether stud replacement is required.

If inspection reveals that any of the studs require replacement, the retailer may need to make arrangements to have the remainder of the repair performed by an automotive body shop. Subaru will cover the expense of a loaner vehicle, if the repair cannot be completed the same day it is started as a result of subletting the remainder of the repair to a body shop.

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## OWNER NOTIFICATION

Notification letters will be sent to owners of all vehicles included in this recall. Owner notification will occur around October 7, 2014. A copy of the Owner Notification Letter is included at the end of this bulletin.

## RETAILER AFFECTED VIN LISTS

Each Subaru retailer that sold an affected vehicle will receive notification from their Zone Office prior to owner notification.

## SUBARU RETAILER PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITY

Retailers are to promptly perform the applicable service procedures to correct all affected vehicles in their inventory (used, demo & SSLP). Additionally, whenever a vehicle subject to this recall is taken into retailer inventory, or in for service, necessary steps should be taken to ensure the recall correction has been made before selling or releasing the vehicle.

Any vehicles listed in a recall/campaign that are in retailer stock must be:

- Immediately identified.
- Tagged or otherwise marked to prevent their delivery or use prior to inspection and/or repair.
- Repaired in accordance with the repair procedures outlined in the Product Campaign Bulletin.

**Please be advised that it is a violation of Federal law for a retailer to deliver a new motor vehicle covered by a recall under a sale or lease until the defect is remedied. Therefore, any Authorized Subaru Retailer failing to perform the applicable service procedures to correct all affected vehicles in their inventory (new, used, demo) prior to the vehicle being placed in service may be subject to civil penalties of up to \$7,000 per violation (i.e., for each vehicle), as provided in 49 CFR §578.6 and will also be in breach of the Subaru Dealer Agreement.**

## PARTS INFORMATION

The parts required for this recall are listed below:

PART NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	ORDER QUANTITY
L101SAL900	WQN-50 Hitch Repair Kit (includes 8 threaded studs, 8 mounting nuts, and 4 trial/testing nuts)	1
44011AL000	Exhaust Gasket	Qty. 1 for H-4 vehicles Qty. 2 for H-6 vehicles
902350001	Lock Nut	Qty. 2 for H-4 vehicles Qty. 4 for H-6 vehicles

Prior to owner notification, the hitch repair kits, exhaust gaskets, and lock nuts will be distributed to each retailer that sold an affected vehicle. **Retailers should not place orders through the Parts system.**

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## PART RETURN PROCEDURES

Upon claim approval, SOA will generate a Part Return Notice for the hitch repair kit, part number L101SAL900. To satisfy the Part Return Notice, the following parts must be returned to the SOA Part Collection Center (PCC) at the shipping address listed on the notice:

- The eight (8) original M10 nuts removed from the vehicle
- The four (4) bright silver Trial Nuts used during the inspection
- Any unused threaded studs not needed for the repair

A properly completed Warranty Parts Tag (MSA5W402A) and a copy of the repair order must be included with the returned parts. Failure to return these parts will result in a claim debit.

## SERVICE PROCEDURE

The Service Procedure for this campaign involves inspection of the trailer hitch frame mounting stud bolts and replacement of the eight retaining nuts threaded onto those bolts. Any of the threaded stud bolt(s) found to be damaged and fail the Trial Nut inspection procedure must be replaced.

### Parts Required

PART NAME:	PART NUMBER	QUANTITIES REQUIRED
Hitch Repair Kit	L101SAL900	1
Exhaust Gasket	44011AL000	1 (H-4), 2 (H-6)
Lock Nuts	902350001	2 (H-4), 4 (H-6)

The Hitch Repair Kit, p.n. L101SAL900 consists of the following:



**TRIAL NUT** (Bright Silver) 4 pcs.

For **TESTING ONLY**, must be returned to SOA with the other 8 removed nuts.

**REPLACEMENT NUT** (Gray) 8 pcs.

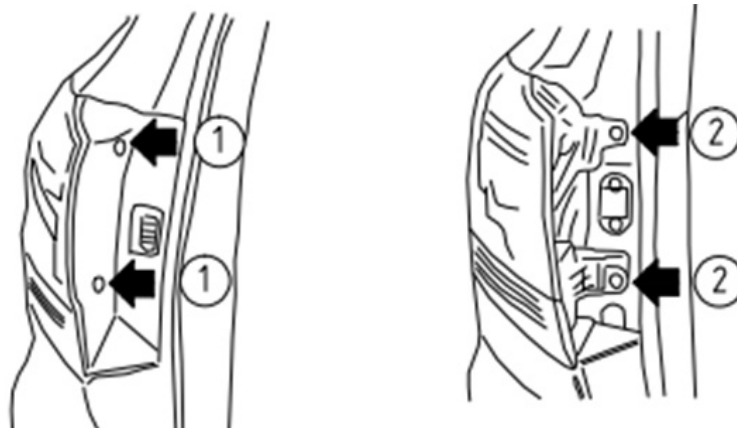
All 8 **MUST** be installed and torqued to 51 ft. lbs.

**STUD BOLT** 8 pcs.

To be replaced as needed after inspection and thread testing with the Trial Nuts.

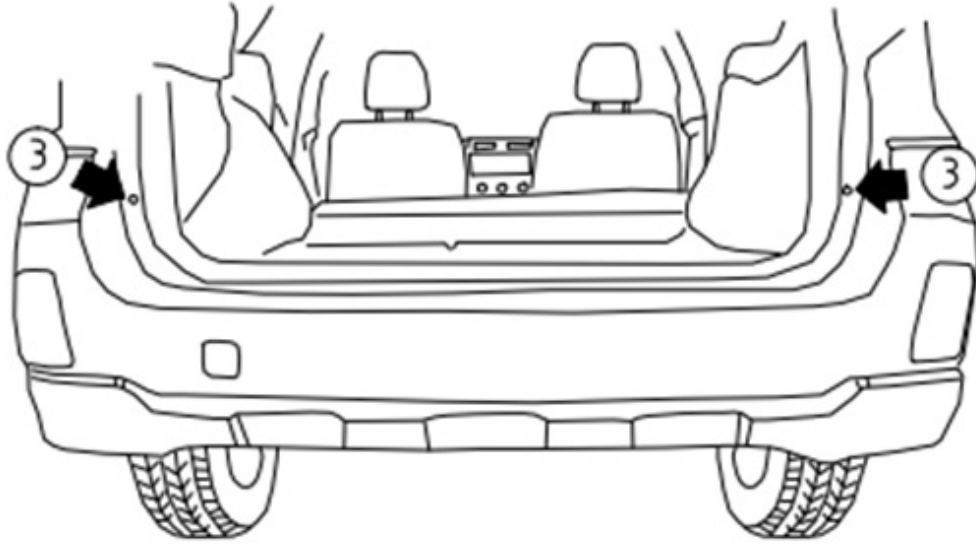
### STEP 1- Initial Disassembly and Hitch Frame Retaining Nut Inspection

- Remove both rear combination lamp assemblies following the procedure below:
  1. Remove both combination lamp covers by removing the screw clips (1).
  2. Using a 10mm socket, remove the 2 bolts securing the combination lamp assemblies. Remove the assembly by pulling straight back. (Repeat for both sides.)

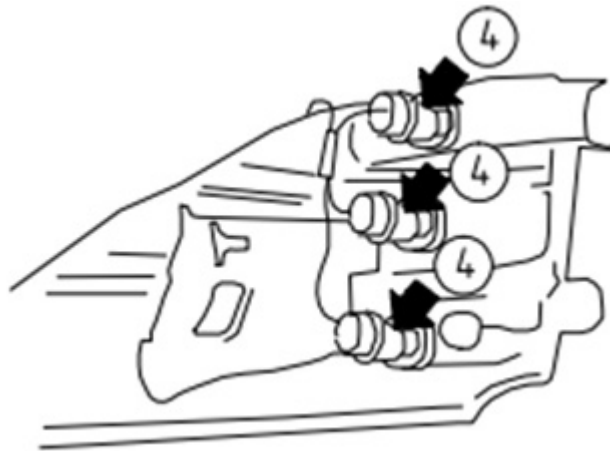


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3. Remove the 2 screws (3) screws securing the bumper fascia. Screws can be accessed by **CAREFULLY** opening the access covers.



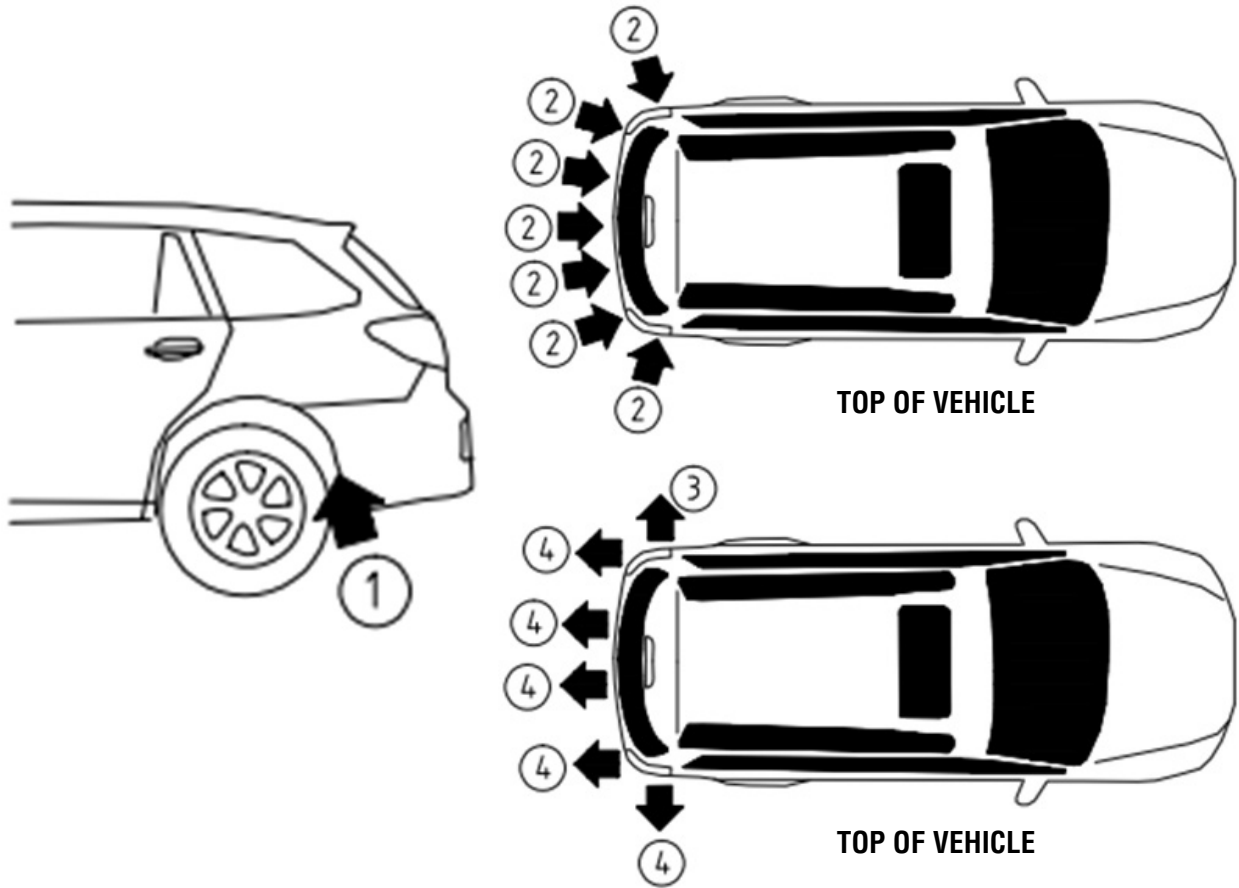
4. Remove the 2 combination lamp bulb sockets and harness connector from each side.



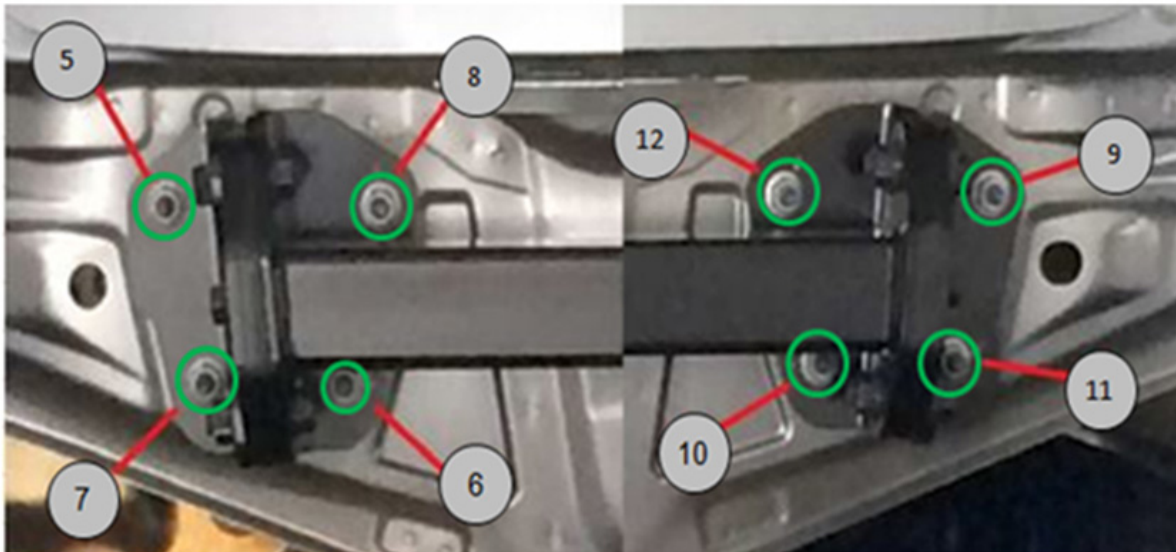
Set all parts aside and protect from damage during bumper fascia removal.

- Remove rear bumper fascia following the procedure below:
  1. With a screwdriver, release (1) small push button fastener per side on the left and right side of the fascia wheel well. Use the tip of the screwdriver to push the center of the pin in.
  2. With a small flat head screwdriver, remove (7) large push pin fasteners across the length of the bumper.
  3. Start at the LH side rear wheel. Using both hands, pull one side of the fascia out from the vehicle.
  4. Continue around the rear LH side. At the rear corner, begin to pull rearward and work across the vehicle from the left to right to remove the entire bumper fascia.
  5. Fully release the bumper from the vehicle body.
  6. Lay the bumper fascia aside where it will not be damaged during hitch R&R.

*Continued...*



- Once the rear bumper fascia has been removed, remove each of the eight M10 (15mm hex) retaining nuts (circled in green below) securing the hitch frame to the stud bolts **one at a time** using **HAND TOOLS ONLY**. As each nut is removed, inspect the flange portion of the nut for a stamping mark as follows:



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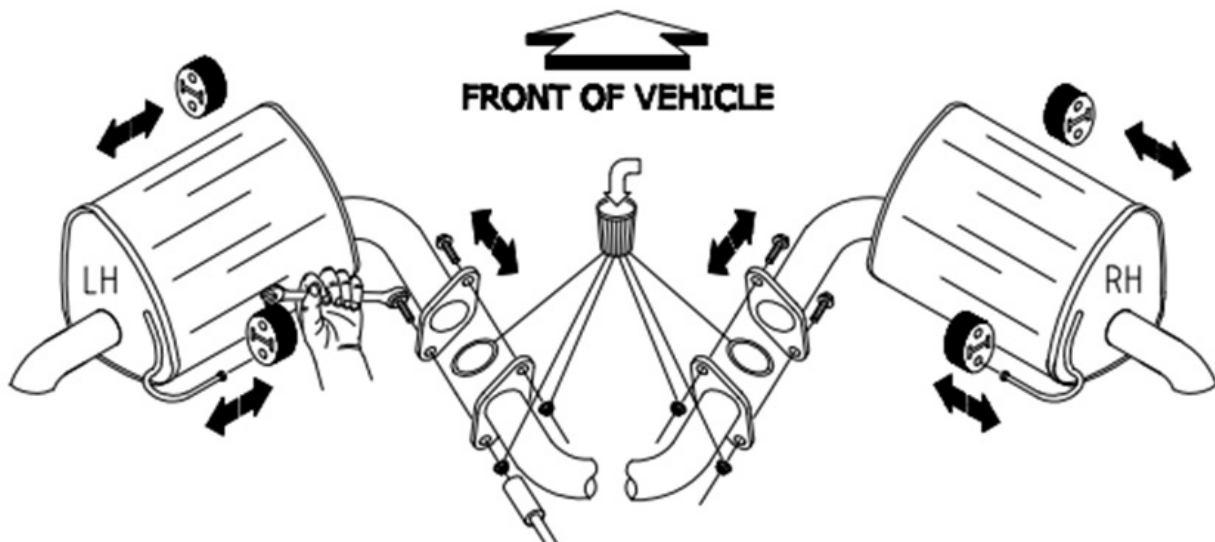
- If all eight removed nuts have an “S” stamping mark on them as shown below, replace them with the **GRAY** nuts included in the Hitch Repair Kit and torque to 51 ft. lbs. **in the sequence shown in the chart on pg. 8 (5-12)**. Once all of the new **GRAY** nuts have been installed, skip ahead to **STEP 7** to complete the campaign service procedure.



- If any of the nuts have stamping marks other than an “S”, the hitch frame must be removed and the stud bolt threads must be closely inspected for damage.

#### STEP 2- Hitch Frame Assembly Removal

- Remove the rear muffler(s) and heat shield(s). Retain the muffler bolts for re-use.



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- Remove the two M12 hitch frame bolts (17mm hex) from the back of each frame rail shown below.



### STEP 3- Stud Bolt Thread Inspection Procedure

- Inspect the threads of each stud bolt for damage.
  - o If severe damage to the threads is confirmed as shown in the example photo below, the affected stud bolt(s) must be replaced.
  - o If the threads do not appear to be severely damaged, take one of the bright silver Trial Nuts from the Hitch Repair Kit and thread it onto the stud bolt by hand. A 15mm socket can also be used to turn the nut by hand only (no ratchet or other turning tools). Thread the Trial Nut all the way onto the stud bolt until it contacts the body. If the Trial Nut can be threaded onto the stud bolt BY HAND, the stud bolt does not need to be replaced. Inspect all the stud bolts using the four bright silver Trial nuts included in the Hitch Repair Kit. Each Trial Nut should only be used twice (to test only two stud bolts).

**Trial Nut  
(Bright silver finish)**



- If the Trial Nut cannot be threaded all the way on by hand as described above, the affected stud bolt(s) will need to be replaced. Mark the affected stud bolt(s) with paint to identify them for replacement.

*Continued...*

**NOTE:** Slight resistance may be felt at some point(s) during this testing. If the Trial Nut can be run back and forth **BY HAND ONLY** a few times and overcome the resistance, the stud bolt is acceptable for reuse.

#### **STEP 4- Stud Bolt Replacement**

**IMPORTANT:** If it is determined any stud bolt replacements are required, it is recommended the following repairs be performed by a qualified body shop which has the proper tools, welding capabilities, and resources for restoring the vehicle's OEM corrosion protection and sound deadening characteristics after completing the repair.

**REMINDER:** Record the customer's radio station presets and (if applicable) navigation system favorites before sending the vehicle to the Body Shop as the battery must be disconnected during the repair.

#### **Mounting Stud Bolt Replacement Procedure, General Guidelines for Body Shops**

- Scrape the sound deadening and undercoating off the stud bolt flange and surrounding area.



- Using a small belt sander / grinder, grind the stud bolt flange away while being careful to not overheat or damage the surrounding sheet metal



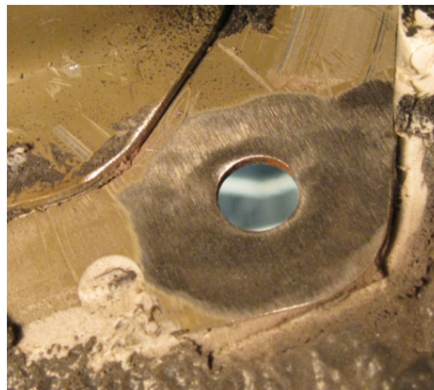
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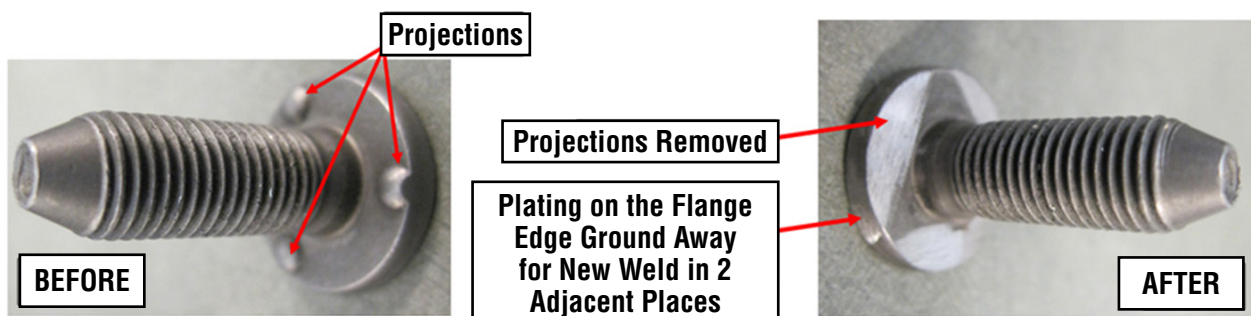
- When the stud bolt flange gets thin enough, the edges will start to discolor from heat and indicate the locations of the 3 welds securing it to the sheet metal. Continue grinding **CAREFULLY** until the bond holding the stud bolt can be broken by tapping it through from the outside with a hammer. If the stud bolt does not break loose with a firm tap of the hammer, continue grinding the flange until it breaks free. **DO NOT use any excessive force which may bend or damage the sheet metal.**



- Once the damaged stud bolt(s) are removed, dress the area smooth for the replacement. Remove any remnants of the original welds to prevent contamination of the new welds.



- Before the new stud bolt(s) can be installed, the three projections on the underside of the flange shown in the “before” photo below must be removed as it **MUST SIT FLUSH** against the sheet metal before it can be welded to the vehicle. In addition, lightly grind the plating off of 2 adjacent spots on the edge of the flange where the new welds will be applied. Always take precautions to protect the threads when grinding off the projections. A stud ready to install and weld is shown in the “after” photo below.

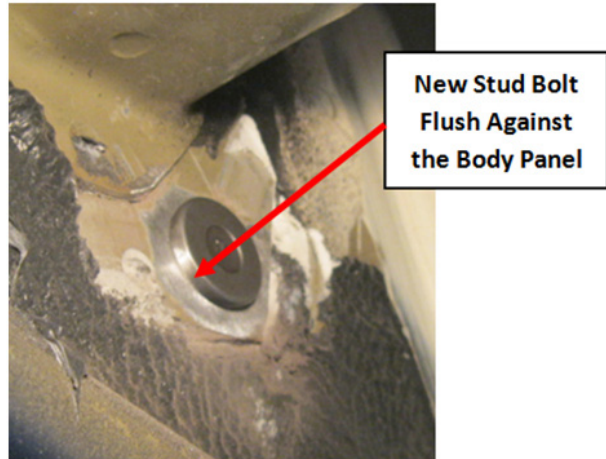
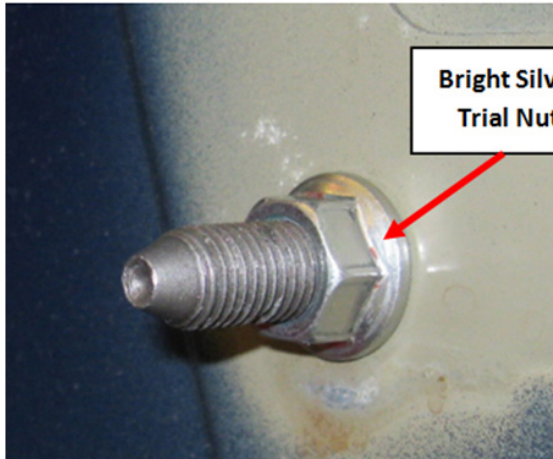


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**VERY IMPORTANT: THE VEHICLE BATTERY MUST BE DISCONNECTED BEFORE PERFORMING ANY WELDING OPERATIONS OR ELECTRICAL COMPONENT DAMAGE MAY RESULT.**

- Install the new stud bolt through the hole and thread on a bright silver Trial Nut from the outside to hold it in place tight against the body during welding as shown below. Torque the Trial Nut to 5-10 ft. lbs.

**NOTE: DO NOT** use the replacement gray nuts for this purpose.



- After securing the new stud bolts to the body panel, apply 2 welds approximately ¼” long and adjacent to each other to secure each stud bolt in place as shown in RED in the reference illustration below.



- When welding is complete, restore the vehicle’s corrosion protection, sound deadening and undercoating to OEM specifications.

**STEP 5-** Once all the stud bolt threads have passed inspection and/or been replaced, remove the Trial Nuts and reinstall the hitch frame assembly.

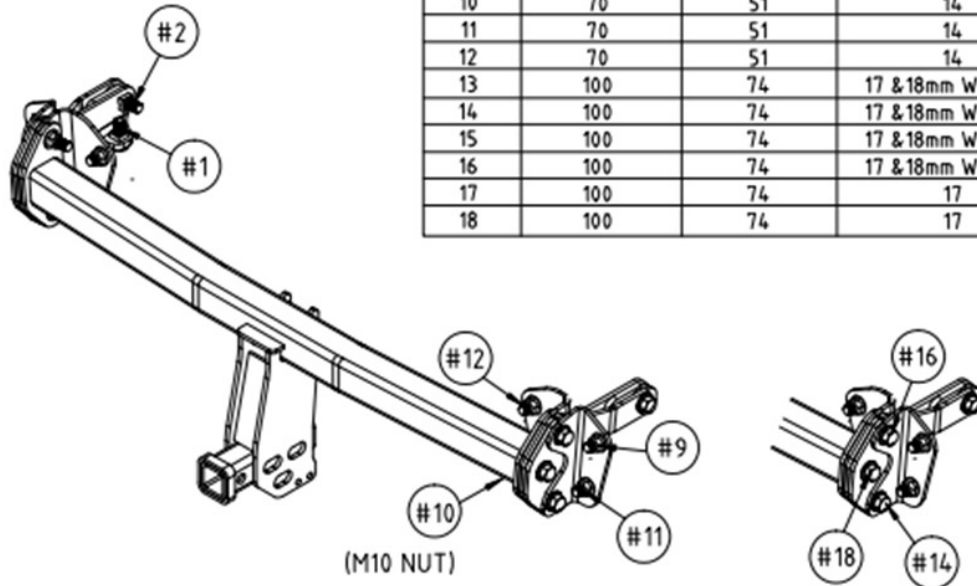
**VERY IMPORTANT:** Follow the torque values and tightening sequence of all the fasteners closely per the following table:

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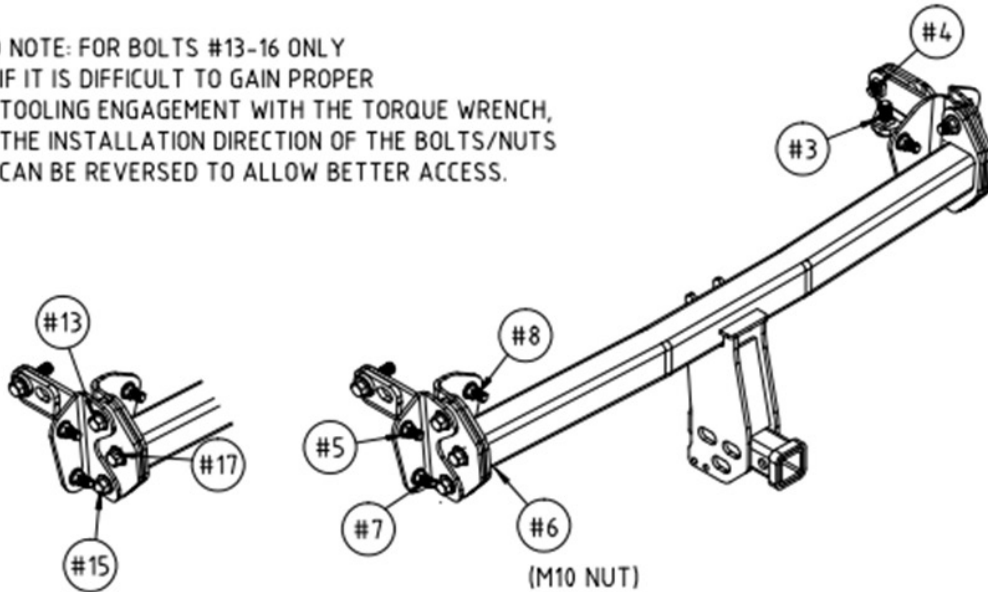
## TORQUE FASTENERS

1) TORQUE ALL FASTENERS IN THE ORDER AND TO THE TORQUE REQUIREMENTS AS SHOWN IN THE TABLE.

ORDER	TORQUE (Nm)	TORQUE (ft-lb)	SOCKET SIZE (mm)
1	100	74	17
2	100	74	17
3	100	74	17
4	100	74	17
5	70	51	14
6	70	51	14
7	70	51	14
8	70	51	14
9	70	51	14
10	70	51	14
11	70	51	14
12	70	51	14
13	100	74	17 & 18mm WRENCH
14	100	74	17 & 18mm WRENCH
15	100	74	17 & 18mm WRENCH
16	100	74	17 & 18mm WRENCH
17	100	74	17
18	100	74	17



2) NOTE: FOR BOLTS #13-16 ONLY IF IT IS DIFFICULT TO GAIN PROPER TOOLING ENGAGEMENT WITH THE TORQUE WRENCH, THE INSTALLATION DIRECTION OF THE BOLTS/NUTS CAN BE REVERSED TO ALLOW BETTER ACCESS.



- **REMINDER: NEVER** re-use any of the eight original M10 nuts. The eight original M10 nuts, the four Trial Nuts, and any unused threaded stud bolts must be retained. Upon claim approval, SOA will issue a Parts Return Notice for these items.

*Continued...*

**STEP 6** - After the hitch frame assembly has been reinstalled and all fasteners properly torqued, reinstall the muffler heat shield(s) (torque retaining bolts to 7.4 ft. lbs.) and the muffler(s) using a **new** exhaust gasket(s) and **new** lock nuts (torque to 35.4 ft. lbs.).

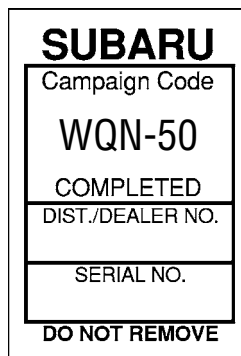
**STEP 7**- Re-install the bumper fascia and the combination lamps in reverse order of removal to complete the campaign service procedure

**RECALL IDENTIFICATION LABEL**

**Type or print the necessary information on a Service Program identification label.** The completed label should be attached to the vehicle’s upper radiator support.

Additional labels are available through normal parts ordering channels. The part number is MSA6P1302. Ordering qty 1 = 1 sheet of 20 labels.

PART NUMBER	APPLICABILITY	DESCRIPTION	ORDER QUANTITY
MSA6P1302	All models	Campaign Completion Labels (contains one sheet of 20 labels)	1



**CLAIM REIMBURSEMENT AND ENTRY PROCEDURES**

Credit to perform this recall will be based on the submission of properly completed repair order information. Retailers may submit claims through ‘Vehicle Claim Entry’ on Subarunet.com.

**Listed below is claim entry information:**

LABOR DESCRIPTION	LABOR OPERATION #	FAIL CODE	LABOR TIME
Inspect & Replace ‘S’ Nuts – (all 8 nuts contain ‘S’ marking)	A105-400	WQN-50	0.7
Inspect & Replace Nuts, Remove Hitch Frame, Inspect Stud Bolts (no stud bolt damage found)	A105-401		0.9
Inspect & Replace Nuts, Remove Hitch Frame, Inspect Stud Bolts, Replace 1 Stud Bolt	B105-501		1.7
Inspect & Replace Nuts, Remove Hitch Frame, Inspect Stud Bolts, Replace 2 Stud Bolts	B105-502		2.5
Inspect & Replace Nuts, Remove Hitch Frame, Inspect Stud Bolts, Replace 3 Stud Bolts	B105-503		3.3

*Continued...*

LABOR DESCRIPTION	LABOR OPERATION #	FAIL CODE	LABOR TIME
Inspect & Replace Nuts, Remove Hitch Frame, Inspect Stud Bolts, Replace 4 Stud Bolts	B105-504	WQN-50	4.1
Inspect & Replace Nuts, Remove Hitch Frame, Inspect Stud Bolts, Replace 5 Stud Bolts	B105-505		4.9
Inspect & Replace Nuts, Remove Hitch Frame, Inspect Stud Bolts, Replace 6 Stud Bolts	B105-506		5.7
Inspect & Replace Nuts, Remove Hitch Frame, Inspect Stud Bolts, Replace 7 Stud Bolts	B105-507		6.5
Inspect & Replace Nuts, Remove Hitch Frame, Inspect Stud Bolts, Replace 8 Stud Bolts	B105-508		7.3
Sublet Repair, Administration Expenses	C101-108		0.3

**NOTE:** The labor time for replacing the stud bolt(s) includes time for restoring the vehicle's corrosion protection, sound deadening, and undercoating.

PART NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	ORDER QUANTITY
L101SAL900	WQN-50 Hitch Repair Kit (includes 8 threaded studs, 8 mounting nuts, and 4 trial/testing nuts)	1
44011AL000	Exhaust Gasket	Qty. 1 for H-4 vehicles Qty. 2 for H-6 vehicles
902350001	Lock Nut	Qty. 2 for H-4 vehicles Qty. 4 for H-6 vehicles

**REMINDER:** Once the claim for this campaign is submitted and approved, a Part Return Notice will be sent for the return of part number L101SAL900 (Hitch Repair Kit). When this request has been received, the following parts must be returned to ensure proper claim credit:

- The eight original M10 nuts
- The four bright silver Trial Nuts
- Any unused threaded stud bolts

Be sure to include a properly completed Warranty Parts Tag and a copy of the repair order for proper claim credit. Failure to return all of these items will result in a claim debit.

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## OWNER NOTIFICATION LETTER

### IMPORTANT SAFETY RECALL

This notice applies to the VIN identified  
in the address section printed below.



**Subaru of America, Inc**  
Subaru Plaza  
PO Box 6000  
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-6000  
800-782-2783  
www.subaru.com

**Subaru Recall Campaign WQN-50**  
**NHTSA Recall No. 14V-577**  
**October 2014**

### Dear Subaru Owner:

This notice is sent to you in accordance with the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act.

Subaru of America, Inc. has decided that a defect which relates to motor vehicle safety exists in certain 2015 model year Subaru Outback vehicles.

You received this notice because our records indicate that you currently own one of these vehicles.

### REASON FOR THE RECALL

This recall applies to certain 2015 model year Subaru Outback vehicles equipped with a genuine Subaru accessory trailer hitch assembly, specifically part number L101SAL010.

Mounting nuts included in the accessory trailer hitch assembly kit are used to affix the trailer hitch to eight separate threaded studs welded to the body of the affected vehicles. Subaru has determined that during the installation process, the installer may have applied excessive torque when tightening those mounting nuts. If so, the threaded studs on the vehicle may have been damaged.

If excessive tightening of the mounting nuts occurred during installation of the accessory trailer hitch assembly, the mounting nuts may not provide sufficient force to remain attached to the threaded studs or the threaded studs might break. If either of those conditions is experienced while a trailer is being towed, the driver might not be able to operate the vehicle as desired or the trailer may detach from the vehicle. Either situation could possibly result in a crash.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE REPAIR

Subaru will replace the mounting nuts for the accessory trailer hitch assembly and inspect the vehicle's threaded studs for damage. Any damaged studs will be replaced. This repair will be performed at no charge to you.

### WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

You should immediately contact your Subaru retailer (dealer) for an appointment to have the accessory trailer hitch assembly inspected and repaired.

***UNTIL THIS REPAIR CAN BE PERFORMED, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO NOT USE THE TRAILER HITCH.***

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## HOW LONG WILL THE REPAIR TAKE?

The time to access and replace the mounting nuts for the accessory trailer hitch assembly, and to inspect the vehicle's threaded studs, is approximately one hour. If the inspection reveals that any of the studs require replacement, your Subaru retailer may need to make arrangements to have the remainder of the repair performed by an automotive body shop.

It may be necessary to leave your vehicle for a longer period of time on the day of your scheduled appointment to allow your Subaru retailer flexibility in scheduling. If the repair cannot be completed the same day it is started, Subaru will cover the expense of a loaner vehicle.

## CHANGED YOUR ADDRESS OR SOLD YOUR SUBARU?

If you have moved or sold your vehicle, please complete the enclosed prepaid postcard and mail it to us. Or if you prefer to update this information online, please go to [www.subaru.com](http://www.subaru.com), select 'Customer Support,' then select 'Address Update' or 'Ownership Update' from the drop down menu.

## IF YOU NEED FURTHER ASSISTANCE:

To locate the nearest Subaru retailer you can access our website at [www.subaru.com](http://www.subaru.com) and select 'Find a Retailer'.

If you need additional assistance, please contact us directly:

- By e-mail: Go to [www.subaru.com](http://www.subaru.com) and select "Contact Us".
- By Telephone: 1-800-SUBARU3 (1-800-782-2783)  
Monday through Thursday between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. ET.  
Friday between 10:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. ET  
Saturday between 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. ET
- By U.S. Postal mail: Write us at Subaru of America, Inc., Attn. Customer Retailer Services  
Department P.O. Box 6000, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-6000.

Please contact us immediately if the Subaru retailer fails or is unable to make the necessary repairs free of charge.

You may also contact the Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1200 New Jersey Ave. SE, West Building, Washington, DC 20590 or call the toll free Auto Safety Hotline at 1-888-327-4236 (TTY: 1-800-424-9153) or go to <http://www.safercar.gov> if you believe the Subaru retailer has failed or is unable to remedy your vehicle without charge within a reasonable amount of time.

Your continued satisfaction with your Subaru is important to us. Please understand that we have taken this action in the interest of your safety and your vehicle's proper operation. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this matter may cause and urge you to schedule an appointment as soon as possible to have this repair performed.

Sincerely,  
Subaru of America, Inc.

***Notice to Lessors:*** Under Federal law the lessor of a vehicle who receives this letter must provide a copy of it to the vehicle lessee(s) within 10 business days from receipt. The lessor must also keep a record of the lessee(s) to whom this letter is sent, the date sent, and the applicable vehicle identification number (VIN). (For the purposes of this section, a lessor means a person or entity that in the last twelve months prior to the date of this notification has been the owner, as referenced on the vehicle's title, of any five or more leased vehicles. A leased vehicle is a vehicle leased to another person for a term of at least four months.)

***A subsidiary of Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd.***