

# HONDA

AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO., INC.  
1919 Torrance Boulevard • Torrance, CA 90501-2746  
(310) 783-2000

May 13, 1999

99V-069 01

Mr. Kenneth N. Weinstein,  
Associate Administrator  
Office of Safety Assurance  
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY  
ADMINISTRATION  
400 Seventh St., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

On March 31, 1999, Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (HMC) determined that a defect relating to motor vehicle safety exists in the ball joint in the front suspension of certain 1996-1998 model Acura RL, TL and Honda Prelude; and, 1997-1998 model Acura GL, Honda Accord, Odyssey and Isuzu Oasis. The following information is submitted pursuant to the requirements of 49 CFR 573.5.

This final submission replaces the previous partial submission.

573.5(c)(1)

**Name of manufacturer:** Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (HMC)  
Honda of America Manufacturing, Inc. (HAM)

**Manufacturer's Agent:** William R. Willen  
American Honda Motor Co., Inc.  
1919 Torrance Blvd.  
Torrance, CA 90501-2746

573.5(c)(2)

**Identification of potentially affected vehicles:**

<u>Make/Model</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>VIN/Dates of Manufacture</u>
Acura RL	Certain 1996 model year	JH4KA9xxxTC000073-JH4KA9xxxTC015248 December 15, 1995 to August 7, 1996
	Certain 1997 model year	JH4KA9xxxVC000002-JH4KA9xxxVC016377 August 8, 1996 to September 1, 1997
	Certain 1998 model year	JH4KA9xxxWC000017-JH4KA9xxxWC007053 September 16, 1997 to February 21, 1998

573.5(c)(2)

**Identification of potentially affected vehicles: (cont.)**

<u>Make/Model</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>VIN/Dates of Manufacture</u>
Acura 2.5TL	Certain 1996 model year	JH4UA2xxxTC021085-JH4UA2xxxTC025075 May 8, 1996 to August 7, 1996
	Certain 1997 model year	JH4UA2xxxVC000008-JH4UA2xxxVC008590 August 24, 1996 to July 11, 1997
	Certain 1998 model year	JH4UA2xxxWC000001-JH4UA2xxxWC006036 August 19, 1997 to February 20, 1998
Acura 3.2TL	Certain 1996 model year	JH4UA3xxxTC012319-JH4UA3xxxTC014540 May 9, 1996 to August 2, 1996
	Certain 1997 model year	JH4UA3xxxVC000009-JH4UA3xxxVC012850 September 4, 1996 to July 21, 1997
	Certain 1998 model year	JH4UA3xxxWC000001-JH4UA3xxxWC006112 August 27, 1997 to February 18, 1998
Acura 2.3CL	Certain 1997 model year	19UYA1xxxVL023878-19UYA1xxxVL024652 August 20, 1997 to August 25, 1997
	Certain 1998 model year	19UYA1xxxWL000001 April 28, 1997  19UYA3xxxWL000001-19UYA3xxxWL000022 June 3, 1997 to September 9, 1997
Acura 3.0CL	Certain 1997 model year	19UYA2xxxVL018057-19UYA2xxxVL019402 August 22, 1997 to September 10, 1997
	Certain 1998 model year	19UYA2xxxWL000001-19UYA2xxxWL000013 June 5, 1997 to September 9, 1997
Honda Accord Sedan	Certain 1997 model year	1HGCD5xxxVA243517-1HGCD5xxxVA243816 July 23, 1997  1HGCD5xxxVA267121-1HGCD5xxxVA260294 August 21, 1997 to August 26, 1997  JHMCD5xxxVA021143-JHMCD5xxxVA022004 July 30, 1997 to August 4, 1997
	Certain 1998 model year	1HGCF8xxxWA000036-1HGCF8xxxWA003281 May 9, 1997 to September 2, 1997
		1HGCG1xxxWA000001-1HGCG1xxxWA001373 February 4, 1997 to August 29, 1997

## 573.5(c)(2)

**Identification of potentially affected vehicles: (cont.)**

<u>Make/Model</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>VIN/Dates of Manufacture</u>
Honda Accord Sedan	Certain 1998 model year (continued)	1HGCG5xxxWA000001-1HGCG5xxxWA006181 February 4, 1997 to September 8, 1997
		1HGCG8xxxWA000002-1HGCG6xxxWA004858 February 4, 1997 to September 5, 1997
Honda Accord Coupe	Certain 1998 model year	1HGCG2xxxWA000001-1HGCG2xxxWA000048 May 20, 1997 to August 28, 1997
		1HGCG3xxxWA000001-1HGCG3xxxWA000037 May 20, 1997 to September 4, 1997
Honda Prelude	Certain 1996 model year	JHMBA8xxxTC001965-JHMBA8xxxTC002612 April 20, 1996 to June 21, 1996
		JHMBB1xxxTC000817-JHMBB1xxxTC001163 April 20, 1996 to June 21, 1996
		JHMBB2xxxTC004209-JHMBB2xxxTC005917 April 23, 1996 to June 26, 1996
	Certain 1997 model year	JHMBB6xxxVC000073-JHMBB6xxxVC016586 October 14, 1996 to July 29, 1997
	Certain 1998 model year	JHMBB6xxxWC000006-JHMBB6xxxWC009167 August 20, 1997 to February 20, 1998
Honda Odyssey	Certain 1997 model year	JHMRA1xxxVC021142-JHMRA1xxxVC022232 July 29, 1997 to August 2, 1997
	Certain 1998 model year	JHMRA3xxxWC000023-JHMRA3xxxWC000650 September 1, 1997 to September 11, 1997
Isuzu Oasis	Certain 1997 model year	JR2RJ1xxxVC0001585-JR2RJ1xxxVC0001599 July 29, 1997
	Certain 1998 model year	JR2RJ2xxxWC0000003-JR2RJ2xxxWC0000091 September 2, 1997 to September 10, 1997

**Description of the basis for the determination of the recall population:**

The lower arm ball joints in the affected vehicles have polyacetal plastic seats and may have ball pins with a rough surface. Vehicles manufactured before and after the affected group have plastic seats made of different material or ball joints manufactured under an amended process to eliminate the rough surface of the ball pin.

573.5(c)(3)

**Total number of vehicles potentially affected:** 125,380

573.5(c)(4)

**Percentage of affected vehicles that contain the defect:** 13%

573.5(c)(5)

**Defect description:**

**Summary**

Certain vehicles were manufactured with ball joints that may prematurely wear out and, in the worst case, may separate without prior warning. This condition can result in a sudden loss of power, reduced steering control, and may cause an accident.

**Detail**

The surface of the spherical portion of certain ball joints between the front lower arm and knuckle was improperly finished. This rougher than normal condition, when combined with the polyacetal ball seat material results in rapid wear. Although a loosening ball joint will emit some noise, in the worst case, the joint may separate without prior warning. This condition can result in a sudden loss of power, reduced steering control, and may cause an accident.

573.5(c)(6)

**Chronology:**

November 25, 1998	HMC received a complaint of ball joint separation from the Japan domestic market.
November 26, 1998	HMC received the claim part and began an investigation.
March 26, 1999	HMC completed the investigation and analysis.
March 31, 1999	HMC determined that a safety-related defect existed.

573.5(c)(6)(i)

**Program for remedying the defect:**

All owners of the potentially affected vehicles will receive a notification letter. Dealers will replace the front suspension lower ball joints on the affected vehicles. The repair will be performed free of charge.

Mr. Kenneth N. Weinstein

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573.5(c)(8)(i)

**The estimated date to begin sending notifications to owners:** May 14, 1999

**The estimated date to begin sending notifications to dealers:** May 13, 1999

**The estimated date of completion of the notification:** May 14, 1999

573.5(c)(9)

**Representative copies of all notices, bulletins and other communications:**

A copy of the dealer service bulletin and text of the final customer notification letter will be submitted to your office as soon as possible.

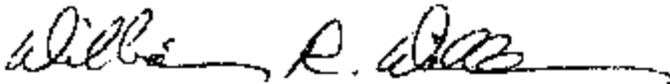
573.5(c)(10)

**Proposed owner notification letter submission:**

A draft of the owner notification letter was previously submitted.

Sincerely,

AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO., INC.



William R. Willen  
Managing Counsel  
Product Regulatory Office

WRW/ke