



**Alcoa Wheel &
Forged Products**

1600 Harvard Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44105-3092 USA
Tel: 1 216 841 3600

May 15, 2003

Kenneth Weinstein
Associate Administrator for Enforcement
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Ref. Amended Part 573 Report for Recall No. 03E-028

Dear Mr. Weinstein,

Please find the following items attached:

1. Amended Part 573 Report dated May 15, 2003,
2. Draft Notification letter to Alcoa Wheel Distributors, and
3. Proposed Recall envelope to be used for mailing.

The Part 573 report was amended to include two additional part numbers under Section 2 and to change "were sold between" to "were manufactured between." In Section 3.

I need to obtain NHTSA's approval for Item 2, Notification letter and Item 3, Recall envelope prior to our first mailing. Please mail or e-mail your agency's approval or suggested revisions.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at (216) 841-6315.

Sincerely,

Richard L. Corliss
Manager, Technology & Quality
Alcoa Wheel and Forged Products
1600 Harvard Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44105

Phone: 216-841-6315

E-mail: Richard.Corliss@alcoa.com

DEFECT AND NONCOMPLIANCE INFORMATION REPORT
Pursuant to 49 CFR §573.5

NHTSA Form 101-108 (Rev. 5/1996)

1. The manufacturer of the forged aluminum wheel is:

Alcoa Inc.
Alcoa Wheel and Forged Products Division
1600 Harvard Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44105

2. The item that potentially contains the defect is:

Forged aluminum light truck wheels, size 16"x 6", manufactured from 6/1996 to 6/1999 and sold as aftermarket equipment. Specifically, Classic and LTS models which are typically used on full-ton pick-ups such as, Ford F-Series, General Motors GMC, Chevrolet, and Dodge Ram. These wheels are aftermarket products, and do not include any shipments to the original equipment manufacturers. The following model and part numbers are affected:

<u>Model</u>	<u>Part Number</u>
Classic	160231, 160232
	160241, 160242
	160291, 160292
	160301, 160302
LTS	160251, 160252
	160261, 160262
	160271, 160272

3. The total number of wheels containing the defect is:

50,432 wheels of all associated part numbers (Front, Rear, or Dual use) were
between July 1996 and June 1999.

4. The percentage of the wheels estimated to actually contain the defect is:

100% of these part numbers have the potential of exhibiting this defect condition; however, the history of recent product returns indicates that only wheels on the steer axle are being affected in the field.

5. The following is a description of the defect:

The preferred failure mode for these wheels provides for slow loss of air pressure alerting the consumer to the problem; however, some of the subject wheels are developing classic fatigue cracks initiating at multiple locations in the outboard bead seat area. Sometimes the consumer has ignored the air leakage problem by refilling the tire as necessary to maintain air pressure. Sometimes the tire has been able to maintain the integrity of the tire pressure by sealing the crack within the beadsat and thus preventing the wheel from leaking air. In these latter two circumstances, the cracks over time may propagate around the circumference of the wheel along the bead seat of the tire, causing the face of the wheel to separate from the remaining part of the wheel.

6. The following is a chronology of all principal events that were the basis for the determination that the defect related to motor vehicle safety:

While the incidence of these wheels being returned under Alcoa's normal five year warranty is no higher than with other models, the failure mode of some of the returned wheels may create a product safety issue. Historical data indicate a 5 year warranty return rate of ~0.24% for this whole family of 16"x 6" wheels, which is within a normal expectation of warranty returns over 5 years.

Since January 2001, Alcoa has had three incidents of a wheel separation from a vehicle due to the fatigue crack propagating around the wheel under the bead seat. None of these incidents has resulted in personal injury, but some have resulted in minor property damage.

In addition, during this period 17 wheels have been returned to our warranty center that had bead seat cracks that had resulted in loss of air in a wheel/tire assembly.

7. The following is a description of the manufacturer's program for remedying the defect:

A design change that added cross sectional thickness in the area of the bead seat was implemented across all 16" x 6" part numbers during the first half of 1999. This design change has eliminated this failure mode. All 16" x 6" after market wheels manufactured and sold since June 1999 do not have this failure mode, and are excluded from this recall effort. Affected wheels can be identified by the manufactured date stamped in the wheel. The manufactured date can be validated by the end customer without the need to remove the tire from the wheel.

We will attempt to directly notify any consumer who purchased a 16" x 6" after market wheel from the distributor/dealer network prior to June 1999. In addition, we will advertise in the appropriate trade magazines and trade shows to alert end-user

consumers that we may not be able to otherwise contact in direct mailing efforts. We will post this recall activity on Alcoa's internet sites such that the consumer can see or find the recall effort. (Note: since this is an aftermarket product, no OEM vehicle registration data is available for purchasers of this wheel.) The notification process to end users is expected to begin by May 31, 2003 utilizing information obtained from Alcoa records and information supplied to Alcoa from our dealers and distributors. Alcoa does not believe that any affected wheels remain in the distribution channel as inventory.

If a consumer observes a cracked wheel or a loss of air is observed, the consumer will be instructed to notify our Wheel Service Center for an immediate, no-cost exchange. Additionally any consumer request to replace 16x6 wheels under this recall, whether they observe a crack or whether the wheel is used in a steer axle application or not, will be honored by Alcoa.

The contact information for wheel replacement or consumer questions is as follows:

Alcoa Wheel Service Center
P.O. Box 557
Mauro Avenue
Knox, PA 16232
Phone 1-888-279-3055
FAX 814-797-5797

The contact information for NHTSA is as follows:

Richard Corliss
Manager, Technology & Quality
Alcoa Wheel and Forged Products
1600 Harvard Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44105
Phone: 1-216-641-6315
E-mail: Richard.Corliss@alcoa.com

May [15], 2003

ALCOA VOLUNTARILY RECALLS AFTERMARKET LIGHT TRUCK WHEEL

**Safety Recall: 16 x 6 Aluminum Forged Light Truck Wheels
Alcoa Dually Wheels, LTS and Classic
Produced between June 1996 and June 1999**

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

Alcoa Wheel Products is voluntarily recalling forged aluminum light truck wheels, size 16x6, LTS and Classic models. Alcoa has determined that a defect relating to motor vehicle safety exists in certain 16 x 6 forged aluminum light truck wheels, specifically, Classic and LTS models which are typically used on full-ton series pick-ups in either a front wheel or dualled wheel axle applications. These wheels were designed to fit the full-ton vehicles of the following manufactures: Ford F-series, General Motors GMC, Chevrolet, Dodge Ram and Ford Econoline van. These wheels are aftermarket products, and do not include any shipments to the original equipment manufacturers. The following part numbers are affected:

<u>Classic Part Number</u>	<u>LTS Part Number</u>
160231, 160232	160251, 160252
160241, 160242	160261, 160262
160281, 160282	160271, 160272
160291, 160292	
160301, 160302	

Our records indicate that you have purchased these Alcoa part numbers that were manufactured during the period affected.

Some of the wheels produced from June 1996 to June 1999 for the aftermarket consumer, are developing over a period of time, classic fatigue cracks initiating at multiple locations in the outboard bead seat area depending on the severity of the application. First indication of a crack would be a gradual air loss in the tire over time. The crack may propagate around the circumference of the wheel along the bead seat of the tire, causing the tire and face of the wheel to separate from the vehicle, resulting in loss of vehicle control and a possible vehicle crash.

Any wheels that require refilling in order to maintain pressure should be taken out of service and replaced immediately.

In all cases, to correct this condition, Alcoa will replace the subject wheels at no cost to the consumer or you.

We need you to take the following actions immediately:

- **Check any existing inventory of the identified part numbers. These wheels need to be returned to Alcoa for replacement or credit. Any wheels produced after June 1999 can remain in your inventory and be sold.**
- **As soon as possible, identify all customers who have purchased the Alcoa 16 x 6, Classic or LTS style wheels since 1996, including their names, addresses, and phone numbers.**
- **We are requesting that you supply this information by June 27, 2003.**
- **Contact Diedre Ashmun, Alcoa Wheel & Forged Products, at (800) 242-9898 with any information about customer names and addresses.**

Alcoa will contact directly the dealers and consumers identified by you to arrange to have their wheels inspected and replaced as necessary. We will direct them to contact the Alcoa Campaign Center at 888-279-3055 for replacement procedure and any additional information.

If you would like to discuss this recall in more detail, or are unclear regarding these directions and requests, please call 888-279-3055 or write the Alcoa Wheel Service Center at P.O. Box 557, Mauro Avenue, Knox, PA 16232, Phone 1-888-279-3055, FAX 814-797-5797.

We apologize to you, one of our valued distributors, for any inconvenience this recall may cause and hope you will share in our concern for consumer safety by providing the requested information as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Richard L. Corliss
Manager, Technology & Quality
Alcoa Wheel and Forged Products

Alcoa Campaign Center
P.O. Box 557, Mauro Avenue
Knox, PA 16232

Salisbury Recall Notice