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By Recall Management Division at 7:04 am, Dec 02, 2011

HONDA

American Honda Motor Co., Inc.
1919 Torrance Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90501-2746
Phone (310) 783-2000

December 1, 2011

Ms. Nancy Lewis
Acting Associate Administrator for Enforcement
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY
ADMINISTRATION
Attn: Recall Management Division (NVS-215)
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

11V-260
(5 Pages)

Dear Ms. Lewis:

On November 4, 2008, Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (HMC) determined that a potential defect relating to motor vehicle safety exists in the driver airbag of certain 2001 model year Honda Accord and Civic automobiles, and we furnished notification to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in accordance with 49 CFR Part 573, Defect and Noncompliance Reports on November 11, 2008.

On June 23, 2009, HMC determined that the VIN range for the recall reported on November 11, 2008 should be expanded for 2001 model year Honda Accord and Civic automobiles, and we furnished notification to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration on June 30, 2009 (with subsequent updates) in accordance with 49 CFR Part 573, Defect and Noncompliance Reports.

On February 2, 2010, HMC decided to include additional vehicles in this recall, based on our ongoing review of this matter, and on February 9, 2010, we furnished notification to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in accordance with 49 CFR Part 573, Defect and Noncompliance Reports. As we had shared with your office previously, certain vehicles included in the original recall were outside of the suspect range, but were recalled to verify the performance of the driver's airbag inflators. The airbag inflators that we received were evaluated and were within design specifications or, if deployed, performed as designed. Nevertheless, we decided to expand the recall in February 2010 because we could not – with absolute certainty – determine that the airbag modules in each of those vehicles would perform as designed.

The June 2009 and February 2010 recall expansions included vehicles that had received replacement service part driver's airbag modules that were produced in the same time frame as the potentially affected airbag modules that were installed as original manufacturer equipment. The vehicles that received replacement part airbag modules were identified through American Honda Motor Co.'s controlled parts ordering system.

On April 21, 2011, HMC determined it was necessary to include approximately 2,430 replacement service part airbag modules that could have been installed in vehicle models that were covered in prior recall expansions that may not have been accounted for through our controlled parts ordering system. On April 27, 2011 we furnished notification to NHTSA in accordance with 49 CFR Part 573, Defect and Noncompliance Reports. Therefore, as Honda informed NHTSA, Honda decided to expand its recall to an additional 833,277 vehicles to determine whether the affected service parts had been installed in any of those vehicles.

Today, we are informing NHTSA that Honda has decided to expand the prior recalls to include additional vehicles which may have had suspect driver's airbag modules installed (either as original equipment or as a service part). Honda is expanding the recalls because earlier this year we learned of an energetic driver's airbag deployment in which the inflator ruptured. The vehicle in question was outside of the VIN range of previous recalls, and the inflator module installed in the vehicle was outside of the suspect range previously identified by the supplier. Additional recent analysis of the supplier's manufacturing records for the period in which this recently ruptured inflator was manufactured revealed a small degree of uncertainty regarding which driver's airbag inflator modules may have been produced utilizing propellant from the suspect processing equipment. It was only through the investigation of the cause of this recent incident involving an inflator module outside of the prior suspect range that identified this potential condition.

To address this concern, Honda has decided to recall all potentially affected vehicles and driver's airbag module service parts for inspection, and as necessary, replacement. Some of the vehicles in this expanded recall may have already been inspected as part of the previous service part recall expansion, with the driver's airbag module installed in the vehicle either being replaced or identified as not being within the prior suspect range.

Owners of vehicles included in this expanded recall will be requested to take their vehicles to a Honda or Acura dealer for inspection. The serial number of the driver's airbag inflator module installed in the recalled vehicle will be captured and entered into an online system. If the serial number is identified as being within the expanded suspect range the module will be replaced at no cost to the owner.

573.6(c)(1)

Name of manufacturer: Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (HMC)
Honda of America Manufacturing, Inc. (HAM)
Honda Canada Manufacturing, Inc. (HCM)
Honda Manufacturing of Alabama (HMA)

Manufacturer's agent: Jay Joseph
American Honda Motor Co., Inc. (AHM)
1919 Torrance Blvd.
Torrance, CA 90501-2746

573.6(c)(2)

Identification of potentially affected vehicles:

<u>Make/Model</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>VIN Range/Dates of Manufacture</u>
To Be Submitted		

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

The recall population was based on sales and service records. The VIN range reflects all possible vehicles in which the affected components potentially could have been installed.

573.6(c)(2)(iv)

Identification of affected component:

Component: Driver airbag module
Country of Origin: U.S.A
Manufacturer: TK Holdings, Inc.
Contact Name: Kazuo Higuchi
Address: 888 16th Street, NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20006
Telephone No.: (202) 729-6332

573.6(c)(3)

Total number of potentially affected vehicles:

272,779 vehicles may have been manufactured with a potentially affected driver's airbag inflator module installed. An additional 640 driver's airbag module service parts may have been sold by Honda in the US or Canada, for which we will contact 603,421 registered owners in the U.S. for inspection and, if necessary, replacement of the driver's airbag module.

573.6(c)(4)

Percentage of affected vehicles that contain the defect: Unknown

573.6(c)(5)

Defect description:

In certain vehicles, the driver's airbag inflator could produce excessive internal pressure. If an affected airbag deploys, the increased internal pressure may cause the inflator to rupture. Metal fragments could pass through the airbag cushion material possibly causing injury or fatality to vehicle occupants.

573.6(c)(6)

Chronology:

Nov. 11, 2008	AHM submitted 573 report to NHTSA (08V-593). HAM continued investigation of returned inflators from the recall.
June 30, 2009	AHM submitted 573 report to NHTSA (09V-259). HAM continued investigation of returned inflators from the recall.
Feb. 2, 2010	HAM completed the investigation and HMC decided to expand this recall to include vehicles identified on the attached list because of the inability to rely on the method of sampling production in use at that time to absolutely assure that the inflators in the recall population meet all production criteria.
Feb. 9, 2010	AHM submitted 573 report to NHTSA (10V-041)

March 2010 – March, 2011

AHM continued to analyze the sales transaction history of potentially affected driver's airbag module service parts to determine how many parts could not be accounted for and thus captured through the prior recall expansions and associated notices. After an exhaustive analysis and records search, AHM determined that some number of potentially affected replacement service part driver's airbag modules had been sold through dealers, but could not be accounted for using the controlled parts system.

April 21, 2011

HMC determined that it was necessary to notify owners of all vehicles in which the 2,430 affected driver's airbag modules could have been installed.

August 15, 2011

Honda became aware of an August 1, 2011 energetic deployment of a driver's airbag inflator that was outside of the prior range of suspect inflators.

Sept. 2, 2011

Honda and Takata initiate analysis of the "outside of range" occurrence.

Sept. 14, 2011

Honda and Takata investigate the possibility that airbag inflator propellant lots were mixed during airbag inflator assembly, resulting in further analysis of airbag inflator production records for the period when propellant was processed by the suspect method.

Nov. 25, 2011

HMC decided to expand the VIN range of suspect driver's airbag inflator modules to include those that could have been assembled with mixed propellant lot production.

573.6(c)(8)(i)

Program for remedying the defect:

The owners of all affected vehicles will be contacted by mail. Owners will be instructed to take their vehicle to a Honda or Acura automobile dealer for inspection of the airbag module serial number, and if necessary, replacement. Vehicles requiring replacement will have the driver's airbag module replaced free of charge.

573.6(c)(8)(ii)

The date to e-mail preliminary notification to dealers:	Dec. 2, 2011
The date to provide service bulletin to dealers:	Dec. 7, 2011
The estimated date to begin sending notifications to owners:	Dec. 26, 2011
The estimated date of completion of the notification:	Jan. 26, 2012

573.6(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.

573.6(c)(10)

Proposed owner notification letter submission:

A draft of the owner notification letter will be submitted to your office as soon as possible.

573.6(c)(11)

Manufacturer's campaign number:

Honda: Q96, R54

Acura: R13, R55

Sincerely,

AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO., INC.



Jay Joseph
Senior Manager
Product Regulatory Office

JWJ:nis