

TOYOTA

**Toyota Motor Engineering &
Manufacturing North America, Inc.**

Vehicle Safety & Compliance
Liaison Office
Mail Code: S-104
19001 South Western Avenue
Torrance, CA 90501

March 7, 2012

Ms. Nancy Lummen Lewis
Associate Administrator for Enforcement
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Attn: Recall Management Division (NVS-215)
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

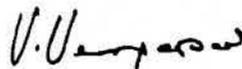
Re: Certain Toyota Tacoma Spiral Cables
Part 573, Defect Information Report

Dear Ms. Lewis:

In accordance with the requirements of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966 and 49 CFR Part 573, on behalf of Toyota Motor Corporation ["TMC"], we hereby submit the attached Defect Information Report concerning a voluntary safety recall of certain Toyota Tacoma vehicles to address an issue with the spiral cable assembly.

Should you have any questions about this report, please contact me at (310) 468-8551.

Sincerely,



Vinnie Venugopal
General Manager
Toyota Motor Engineering & Manufacturing
North America, Inc.

Enclosures
Part 573, Defect Information Report

DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT

1. Vehicle Manufacturer Name:

Toyota Motor Manufacturing de Baja California, S. de C.V. ["TMMBC"]
 Carretera Tijuana Tecate Kilometro 143 y 144
 Tijuana, Baja California C. P. 22550

Toyota Motor Manufacturing California, Inc. ["TMMCA"]
 45500 Fremont Blvd., Fremont, CA, 94538

Fabricating Manufacturer (Only TMMCA's Tacoma)

New United Motor Manufacturing, Inc. ["NUMMI"]
 45500 Fremont Blvd., Fremont, CA, 94538

Affiliated U.S. Sales Company

Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc. ["TMS"]
 19001 South Western Avenue, Torrance, CA, 90501

Manufacturer of Spiral Cable Assembly

TRAM, Inc.
 47200 Port Street, Plymouth, MI 48170 U.S.A. (Tier 1 supplier)

2. Identification of Affected Vehicles:

Based on information from the supplier and vehicle production records, we have determined the affected vehicle population as in the table below.

Make/ Car Line	Model Year	Manufac- turer	VIN		Production Period
			VDS	VIS	
Tacoma	2005 – 2009	TMMCA	#U##N		September 14, 2004 Through August 29, 2008
			#X##N		
		TMMBC	#U##N		October 19, 2004 through August 29, 2008

Note: Although the involved vehicles are within the above VIN range, not all vehicles in this range were sold in the U.S.

Other Toyota models with the same or similar spiral cable assemblies are not affected, because they do not have the same chassis characteristics that result in the problem described below. In addition, spiral cable assemblies manufactured with a 2.88 mm gap between the Flexible Flat Cable (FFC) and the retainer are not affected as described below.

Tacoma models equipped with spiral cable assemblies that use sixteen-channel circuits are also not affected.

3. Total Number of Vehicles Potentially Affected:

Toyota Tacoma: 495,470

4. Percentage of Vehicles Estimated to Actually Experience Malfunction:

Unknown

5. Description of Problem:

Due to the combination of the spiral cable design and characteristics unique to the chassis components of the subject vehicles, steering wheel vibration (“flutter”) may cause friction between the Flexible Flat Cable (FFC) and the retainer in the spiral cable assembly in the steering wheel. In FFC’s with seven-channel circuits, friction over time may result in damage to certain circuits on the flat cable that provides connectivity to the driver’s air bag module. If connectivity is lost, the air bag warning lamp will illuminate. In addition, the driver’s air bag may become deactivated, causing it to not deploy in the event of a crash. This could increase the risk of injury to the driver.

6. Chronology of Principal Events:

March 2011-October 2011

In March 2011, Toyota investigated an increase in the number of customer complaints relating to the high cost of out-of-warranty repairs for replacement of driver’s air bag spiral cables. Toyota requested analysis of the returned parts by the spiral cable supplier.

November 2011 - February 2012

Toyota analyzed the field information and returned parts with the supplier. No abnormalities in the production process of the spiral cable assemblies were found. Toyota began focusing the investigation on the steering wheel characteristics of the Tacoma. Through a series of duplication tests, it was found that steering wheel “flutter”, as a result of the chassis characteristics of the Tacoma, was causing friction in the gap between the FFC and the retainer.

Damage was occurring on certain circuits in FFC’s with seven-channel circuits that provide connectivity to the air bag module. (Certain Tacoma vehicles equipped with spiral cable assemblies using FFC's with sixteen-channel circuits that connected to optional steering wheel features also became damaged, but no damage to the air bag circuits was identified and, in fact, these circuits were not being used for any other function in these models.)

In addition the supplier confirmed that a design change had been made that was introduced in vehicle production in August 2008 to increase the gap between the FFC and the retainer from 0.78mm to 2.88mm. This change had been made as a result of reports received from the Asian market concerning a model that is not sold in the U.S. or substantially similar to a U. S. model, and helped eliminate the possibility of FFC damage caused by debris which may enter into the gap. This improvement was implemented in all similar FFC-type spiral cables.

As a result of the investigation, it was determined that, due to the combination of the spiral cable design and characteristics unique to the chassis components of the subject vehicles, steering wheel “flutter” may cause friction between the Flexible Flat Cable (FFC) and the retainer in the spiral cable assembly in the steering wheel. In FFC’s with seven-channel circuits, friction over time may result in damage to certain circuits on the flat cable that provide connectivity to the driver’s air bag module. This only occurs in assemblies with a 0.78mm gap between the FFC cable and the retainer; assemblies with the larger gap do not create friction that will damage the FFC. If connectivity is lost, the air bag warning lamp will illuminate. In addition, the driver’s air bag may become deactivated, causing it to not deploy in the event of a crash.

February 29, 2012

Toyota decided to conduct a voluntary safety recall campaign in the U.S., Canada, and other safety campaign in Mexico.

7. Description of Corrective Repair Action:

All known owners of the subject vehicles will be notified by first class mail to return their vehicles to a Toyota dealer. The spiral cable assembly will be replaced with a new one at no charge.

Reimbursement Plan for pre-notification remedies for Toyota

The owner letter will instruct vehicle owners who have paid to have this condition remedied prior to this campaign to seek reimbursement pursuant to Toyota’s General Reimbursement Plan.

8. Recall Schedule:

Toyota will mail an interim notification to owners beginning in early April, 2012 to advise owners of this recall and the fact that they will receive a future notice when parts become available to complete repairs. A second mailing will be scheduled when replacement parts are available.

A copy of the draft interim owner notification letter will be submitted to ODI for review as soon as it is available.

9. Distributor/Dealer Notification Schedule:

Toyota will mail interim notifications to distributors/dealers in early April, 2012. Updated dealer notifications will be sent once replacement parts are available.

Copies of dealer communications will be submitted as they are issued.