



Harley-Davidson Motor Company
3700 West Juneau Ave., PO Box 653, Milwaukee, WI 53201
414/342-4680

VIA EMAIL (RMD.ODI@DOT.GOV) and CERTIFIED MAIL

October 17, 2012

Ms. Nancy L. Lewis
Associate Administrator for Enforcement
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Ms. Lewis:

The following information is submitted in accordance with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's defect and noncompliance reporting regulations, 49 CFR Part 573.6.

Harley-Davidson Motor Company, Inc. has decided that a defect related to motor vehicle safety may exist on all model year 2012 and certain model year 2013 V-Rod VRSCDX vehicles.

IDENTIFICATION OF VEHICLES POTENTIALLY CONTAINING THE DEFECT:

This recall involves 2,798 vehicles shipped in the U.S, which represents all 2012 model year and certain 2013 model year VRSCDX vehicles, built from 6/14/2011 through 8/1/2012. This recall covers the subject motorcycle population in its entirety, although not all of these motorcycles may contain the defect.

DESCRIPTION OF DEFECT:

When installed on the subject motorcycles, the License Plate Bracket Assembly (P/N 67900032) mounting screws may come out and allow the assembly to lose retention to the rear fender. This condition may lead to contact with the rear tire which could cause the License Plate Bracket to rotate, possibly damaging the rear brake line. If this condition remains undetected, it may affect rear brake performance, increasing the risk of a crash, which could lead to injury or death of the rider. Harley-Davidson has initiated this recall to correct this condition.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS:

On 7/24/12, Harley-Davidson's Recall Investigation Committee (RIC) received a report from a European subsidiary concerning a license plate bracket assembly which had disengaged from the rear fender and had fallen onto the rear tire. As a result of this report, the RIC initiated an investigation and analysis of this issue.

A search of existing warranty data disclosed 23 warranty claims (which included missing screws and some completely disengaged bracket assemblies) and two customer contacts (one of which was also reflected in the warranty claims information) that were similar to the reported issue, none of which appeared to involve crashes or injuries.

On 8/1/2012, Harley-Davidson received a report from a dealership in Canada concerning a similar failure in which the fallen license plate assembly damaged the rear brake line.

On 8/2/12, as a result of Harley-Davidson's preliminary findings, shipments of new vehicles were suspended pending the outcome of the investigation. This stop-ship included both our Kansas City assembly plant as well as our Manaus, Brazil assembly plant, which produces vehicles for the Brazil market.

During August, 2012 Harley-Davidson collected vibration acceleration data from a VRSCDX running at our vehicle test facility. We then created a laboratory test to reproduce those vibration profiles in accelerated testing of a VRSCDX rear fender/license plate bracket assembly. When we ran test samples we duplicated the loosening of some of the mounting screws that we were seeing in the field. During September, 2012, we also performed a study with an exemplar vehicle on a bench to understand the path a loose license plate bracket assembly might be able to take, and what hazards it may create.

Follow-up searches of our warranty and customer contact data on or around 9/10/2012 showed 24 new warranty claims (which included missing screws and some completely disengaged bracket assemblies) and 1 new contact, with no reports of crashes or injuries as of that date.

On 10/10/12, upon review of the results of the RIC's investigation and analysis, Harley-Davidson's executive management made a determination that a safety-related defect existed in the subject population and declared a recall to remedy the issue.

To date, Harley-Davidson is not aware of any accidents or injuries related to this issue.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM TO REMEDY THE DEFECT:

Authorized Harley-Davidson dealers will determine that the motorcycle is affected by this recall and, if affected, they will first remove the two rear mounting screws, apply medium strength thread-locking agent and reinstall to the proper torque; and then remove the two front mounting screws and replace with the two screws and washers provided in the recall repair kit. Medium strength thread-locking agent will be applied and the new screws with washers will be installed to the proper torque at no charge to the customer.

HARLEY-DAVIDSON MOTOR COMPANY PRE-NOTIFICATION REMEDY REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM:

Harley-Davidson Motor Company incorporates by reference herein the general reimbursement plan it has previously provided to NHTSA for reimbursing customers for remedy costs incurred prior to notification of this recall.

DEALER AND OWNER NOTIFICATION:

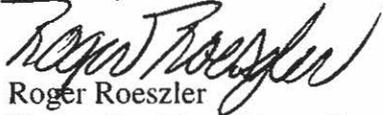
Harley-Davidson expects to notify its dealer network by the week of October 22, 2012 and motorcycle owners by the week of November 5, 2012.

PART 577 NOTICE LETTER:

A draft of the owner notification letter is attached.

Please advise the undersigned of the campaign number assigned by ODI to this recall.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Roeszler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Roger Roeszler
Harley-Davidson Motor Company, Inc.
Recall 0148

Enclosure (Draft Part 577 Owner Letter)