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By Recall Management Division at 1:27 pm, Dec 09, 2013

extang

America's Best Engineered
Truck Accessories

December 6, 2013

VIA OVERNIGHT MAIL AND E-MAIL (RMD.ODI@dot.gov)

Ms. Nancy Lewis
Associate Administrator for Enforcement
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Attention: Recall Management Division (NVS-215)
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: **Extang Corporation's 573.6(c) Defect Information Report**

Dear Ms. Lewis:

This Defect Information Report is being submitted by Extang Corporation pursuant to Part 573.6(c).

1. Manufacturer's name [573.6(c)(1)]:

Extang Corporation ("Extang")
5400 S. State Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48108

2. Identification of motor vehicle equipment [573.6(c)(2)]:

Brand Name: Extang **Model Name:** *Encore* **Model No.:** None

Extang's *Encore* tonneau cover is a hard panel, tri-fold pick-up truck bed cover that has been in production since September 2011 and sold in the U.S. as an aftermarket accessory for pick-up trucks. The rear latch secures the cover at the tailgate and the front latch and lock secures the front panel at the cab. The front and rear-most cab panels can be unlatched and opened, allowing access to the front or back area of the truck bed as noted in *Figure 1*, below.



Figure 1 – *Encore* Tonneau Installation Sheet Excerpt

EXTANG CORPORATION
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TEL: 734-677-0111 or 800-326-1982
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Both panels must be closed and secured during vehicle operation. The *Encore* is the only tonneau cover manufactured by Extang with a front cab panel that can be unlatched and opened.

3. The total number of items of equipment [573.6(c)(3)]:

Approximately 14,204 *Encore* tonneau covers were sold in the U.S. aftermarket to 61 distributors, who in turn may have been sold to approximately 4,000 retail outlets. Extang does not possess or have access to the retail outlet purchasers' names and addresses.

4. The percentages of items of equipment estimated to contain the defect (573.6(c)(4)):

Unknown.

5. A description of the defect [573.6(c)(5)]:

If the vehicle is driven with the front panel unsecured, the tonneau cover assembly could lift and separate from the truck bed, which could create a road hazard for others or cause a collision.

6. A chronology of events [573.6(c)(6)]:

- August 2013: Extang began working with Toyota Canada to resolve an issue with the front panel lock assembly on a dealer installed OEM tonneau cover similar to the *Encore*. Extang manufactured the OEM cover exclusively for Toyota Canada. It was believed that a front panel lock assembly malfunction could cause the front panel to be unsecured. Toyota Canada reported three cover separations from Canadian pick-up trucks while driving, but there were no reports of crashes, injuries or property damage.
- September 2013: Extang continued supporting Toyota Canada's investigation of the OEM tonneau cover front lock assembly.
- October 2013: Toyota Canada decided to conduct a voluntary safety recall in Canada on the OEM tonneau covers. On October 10, pursuant to 49 CFR 579.12, Toyota U.S. filed its Foreign Safety Recall Report, indicating that the tonneau cover being recalled in Canada was not sold in the U.S. Extang assisted Toyota Canada in developing a product improvement for the recall remedy cover that would, among other things, tether the cover to the frame mounting with straps and minimize the risk of cover separation.
- November 2013: In parallel with the Toyota Canada investigation, Extang also conducted a design and data review of a similar cover, the *Encore*, which was sold in the U.S. aftermarket. The design of the aftermarket *Encore* tonneau cover differed significantly from the Toyota Canada cover in the way it was mounted to the truck bed frame, but the same lock assembly design was used on some of the U.S. aftermarket covers. Extang's investigation revealed 48 reports of possible cover separations among approximately 14,204 units sold over the past two years. There were no reports of crashes, injuries or

property damage relating to a separation of an *Encore* tonneau cover in the U.S. Covers can separate for reasons unrelated to design or manufacture (e.g., improper installation and maintenance, cargo interference with panels closing, users not latching the panels in the secured position). Extang concluded that some of the U.S. covers may have been equipped with the same Toyota Canada lock design and were potentially at risk of becoming unsecured while driving.

- On December 3, 2013, Extang decided to conduct a voluntary safety recall of the entire production run of the *Encore* tonneau covers sold in the U.S. aftermarket to minimize the risk of cover separation.

7. A program to remedy the defect [573.6(c)(8)]:

Extang will offer, free of charge, the installation of tether straps that will secure the cover to the frame in the unlikely event, and for whatever reason, the front panel becomes unsecured while driving. Contemporaneously with this filing, Extang has sent a stop sale notice to its distributors with instructions, pursuant to 49 CFR 573.7, to transmit a copy of the stop sale notice to its known retail outlets within five days of receipt. No later than the week of January 6, 2014, Extang will begin mailing the Part 577 recall notification letters to distributors, retail outlets and known vehicle owners. Extang has also engaged a service provider, Impartial Services Group, to assist with identifying additional vehicle owners that are known only to the retail outlets and to aid in providing timely recall notifications to these vehicle owners.

Extang will reimburse customers who have incurred the cost of repairing or replacing an *Encore* tonneau cover that separated from its mounting and was damaged as a result of the front panel being unsecured. Extang, as part of the vehicle owner letter, will request that customers send the original receipt and/or other adequate proof of payment for confirmation of the reimbursement expense.

8. Representative copy of all notices and bulletins [573.6(c)(10)]:

A representative copy of the stop sale notice is attached to this filing. A copy of all other notices and bulletins will be provided to NHTSA for approval when they become available.

9. Manufacturer's campaign number [573.6(c)(11)]:

Extang does not have a campaign number, but intends to use NHTSA's campaign number as the recall identifier on all Part 577 recall notifications.



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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Kelley". The signature is written over a horizontal line.

Steve Kelley
Vice President - Sales
Extang Corporation

Cc: Kelly Schuler (via email)
Safety Recall Analyst
Recall Management Division

Brian S. Westenberg
Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, P.L.C.



America's Best Engineered
Truck Accessories

December 6, 2013

VIA EMAIL & OVERNIGHT MAIL

[Distributor
Name and address]

IMPORTANT SAFETY RECALL STOP SALE NOTICE

Dear Distributors and Retail Outlets:

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

Extang Corporation ("Extang") has decided that a defect which relates to motor vehicle safety may exist in vehicles equipped with Extang's *Encore* tonneau covers. Accordingly, pursuant to 49 CFR 573, Extang has given notice to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration of its intent to conduct a voluntary safety recall of all Extang *Encore* tonneau covers.

The *Encore* tonneau is a hard panel, tri-fold pick-up truck bed tonneau cover that has been in production since September 2011 and sold in the U.S. as an aftermarket accessory for pick-up trucks. The rear latch secures the cover at the tailgate and the front latch and lock secures the front panel at the cab. Both panels must be closed and secured during vehicle operation. If the vehicle is driven with the front panel unsecured, the tonneau cover assembly could lift and separate from the truck bed, which could create a road hazard for others or cause a collision. Instructions on how to identify an *Encore* tonneau cover is noted at the end of this letter.

Our records indicate that your company may have purchased this product for distribution to other retail outlets. As a distributor, you have two legal obligations under federal law:

- 1. If these products are still in your inventory, you must not sell or install these products. It is a violation of federal law to sell or distribute any of the products covered by this recall.**
- 2. You are required to send a copy of this stop sale notice to all retail outlets where you shipped this product within 5 days after receiving this letter.**

Retailers receiving this letter: You are also prohibited by federal law from selling or installing these products.

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Distributors and retailers will be receiving another letter from Extang or its service provider, Impartial Services Group, that will provide further details about this recall and how it will be administered.

If you are a distributor or retailer and have any recalled products in your inventory, please contact Christie Pollari, Customer Service Manager, at 734-434-3504 to make arrangements for the return of the product.

We regret any inconvenience this action may cause you. As we are sure you will appreciate, the safety and quality of our products are of the utmost importance to us.

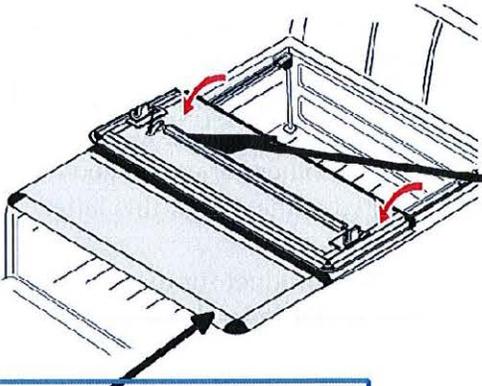
Thank you for your attention and cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Steve Kelley
Vice President - Sales
Extang Corporation

cc: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (via email and overnight mail)

How to Identify an Encore Tonneau Cover



The diagram shows a perspective view of the Encore Tonneau Cover installed on a truck bed. Red arrows point to the front panel and the rear panel. A black arrow points from the front panel to a callout box containing a part number label. Another black arrow points from the rear panel to a callout box containing a shipping box marking label.



This part number label will appear on the inside of the front panel. The *Encore* tonneau covers all start with "62xxx" in the part number sequence.



This label will appear at the right rear of the *Encore* tonneau cover.

Shipping box markings for the *Encore* tonneau cover (includes part number "62xxx").

