Noncompliance Recall: Accord Rear Seat Belt Buckles

BACKGROUND
Seat belt buckles contain a lock bar that engages and locks the seat belt tongue to the buckle. On some 2000–01 Accords, the lock bars in the rear seat belt buckles were improperly made. This prevented the unlatching of some rear buckles during strength compliance tests performed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The affected rear seat belts work properly and provide protection in a crash, but they may be difficult to unlatch after the crash.

VEHICLES AFFECTED
2000 Accord 4-Door:
From VIN 1HGCG....YA091934 thru 1HGCG....YA149702
From VIN 1HGCF8...YA144879 thru 1HGCF8...YA146316

2001 Accord 4-Door:
From VIN 1HGCG....1A003412 thru 1HGCG....1A012264
From VIN 1HGCF8...1A006889 thru 1HGCF8...1A006918

Not all 2000–01 Accords within the VIN ranges are affected by this recall. Before you begin, check for vehicle eligibility by doing any of these checks:
• Check the vehicle’s VIN on your campaign responsibility report.
• Do a VIN status inquiry on DCS.
• Verify that the customer has a customer letter.

CUSTOMER NOTIFICATION
All owners of affected vehicles will be mailed a second notification of this recall. This second notification advises the owner that the center seat belt buckle is also affected. If an inspection of the outer buckles has already been done, a second inspection is needed for the center buckle. An example of the customer notification is at the end of this service bulletin.

CORRECTIVE ACTION
Inspect the assembly number on all rear seat belt buckles. Replace any buckle that is affected by this recall.

PARTS INFORMATION
Refer to the Parts Catalog to order the correct type and color of seat belt buckle or seat belt/retractor assembly.

WARRANTY CLAIM INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OP#</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>FRT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>854530</td>
<td>Inspect the rear seat belt buckles, and center-punch the VIN</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Add left rear seat belt buckle replacement</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Add right rear seat belt buckle replacement</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Add left and right rear seat belt buckle replacement</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Add center rear seat belt buckle replacement</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Add left and center rear seat belt buckle replacement</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Add right and center rear seat belt buckle replacement</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Add left, right, and center rear seat belt buckle replacement</td>
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Failed Part: P/N 04823-S84-A50ZA H/C 6560569
Defect Code: 5BC
Contention Code: L48
Skill Level: Repair Technician
INSPECTION PROCEDURE

1. Push the upholstery down so you can see the number stamped on each of the rear seat belt buckles.

2. Look for the assembly number on the back of each buckle. You may need a light and a magnifying glass to see the number.

Assembly Numbers: 00185ABHMAM, 00186AAHMAM, 00247ABHMAM

NOTE: On 2001 Accord center buckles, a vinyl sheath around the buckle needs to be pulled down to see the number. In cold weather, it may be easier to pull down the sheath if you warm up the interior first.

• If any of the buckles have one of the assembly numbers, go to REPAIR PROCEDURE.
• If none of the buckles have an affected assembly number, go to step 3.

3. Center-punch a completion mark above the eighth character of the engine compartment VIN, then return the vehicle to the customer.

REPAIR PROCEDURE

NOTE: Be careful not to scratch the interior.

1. Replace the affected rear seat belt buckle(s). Refer to page 23-16 of the 1998–02 Accord Service Manual.

   NOTE: To replace the right buckle on '01 Accords, you also need to replace the seat belt/retractor assembly.

2. Center-punch a completion mark above the eighth character of the engine compartment VIN, then return the vehicle to the customer.

   Center-punch here.

   1HGCGXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Example of Customer Letter

March 2002

Noncompliance Recall:
2000–01 Accord
Rear Seat Belt Buckles

Dear Accord Owner:

This letter updates important information we sent to you in January on a recall that may affect your car. Please read it!

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

What is the reason for this notice?

Honda Motor Co., Ltd., has found that certain 2000–01 model year Accords do not comply with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 209, “Seat Belt Assemblies.” Some rear seat belts didn’t unlatch after buckle strength compliance testing conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. An improperly made lock bar inside the buckle caused this failure.

The rear seat belts in your car will work properly and protect you in a crash, but you may have some difficulty unfastening the belts after a crash.

What should you do?

Inspect the Rear Seat Belt Buckles

As soon as possible, check the rear seat belt buckles to see if any are affected by this recall.

NOTE: You need to inspect all rear seat belt buckles, left, right, and center. If you already looked at the outer rear buckles, you still need to inspect the center buckle.

You’ll find an assembly number stamped on the back of the buckle. The assembly number isn’t easy to see; you may need a flashlight and a magnifying glass. Buckles that need replacement are stamped with one of the numbers shown below.
NOTE: On the 2001 Accord center rear buckle, pull down the vinyl sheath to see the number. In cold weather, it may be easier to pull down the sheath if you warm up the interior first.

View from Back Side of Buckle

NOTE: Even if you returned the response card we sent in January, please fill out and return the new card included with this letter. The new card lets us know that you’ve also inspected the center rear buckle.

If none of the rear buckles have the assembly numbers shown, please complete and mail the enclosed, postage-paid Customer Response Card. Federal regulations require us to record recall inspection and repair information for each potentially affected car. If you don’t return the card, you may get more reminder requests.

Assembly Numbers: 00185ABHMAM, 00186AAHMAM, 00247ABHMAM

If any of the rear buckles are marked with an affected assembly number, you should promptly contact any authorized Honda automobile dealer and make an appointment to have the buckle(s) replaced, free of charge. Parts are now available. This repair takes about an hour; however, please plan to leave your vehicle for half a day to allow the dealer flexibility in scheduling.

If you cannot clearly see the buckle assembly number, or if you are not comfortable inspecting the buckles yourself, please contact any authorized Honda dealer and make an appointment for an inspection.

NOTE: If the dealer already inspected the outer rear buckles, please return to have the center buckle inspected.

Who to contact if you experience problems.

If you are not satisfied with the service you get from your Honda dealer, you can write to American Honda Motor Co., Inc. Honda Automobile Customer Service Mail Stop 500-2N-7D 1919 Torrance Blvd. Torrance, CA 90501-2746

If you believe that American Honda or the dealer has failed or is unable to remedy the defect in your car, without charge, within a reasonable period of time (60 days from the date you first contact the dealer for a repair appointment), you may submit a claim to:

Administrator National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 400 Seventh Street, SW Washington, DC 20590

Or call the toll-free Auto Safety Hotline at (888) 327-4236.

What to do if you feel this notice is in error.

Our records show that you are the current owner or lessee of a 2000–01 Accord involved in this recall. If you aren’t, or if the name/address information is incorrect, please call Honda Automobile Customer Service at (800) 999-1009. This will update our records and avoid any further unnecessary mailings to you.

If you have questions.

If you need help with the seat belt inspection

If you cannot clearly see the buckle assembly number, or if you are not comfortable inspecting the buckles yourself, please contact any authorized Honda dealer and make an appointment for an inspection.

NOTE: If the dealer already inspected the outer rear buckles, please return to have the center buckle inspected.

Sincerely,
American Honda Motor Co., Inc. Honda Automobile Division