



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: TQ 14-004
Prompted by: EA13-001
Date Opened: 12/01/2014
Investigator: Christie Iannetta **Reviewer:** Jennifer Timian
Approver: Frank Borris
Subject: Graco Timeliness Query

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: Graco Children's Products Inc.
Products: Graco Children's Products, Inc.
Population: 6,100,000 (Estimated)
Problem Description: Investigation into the timeliness of reporting a defect in the harness buckles of certain child and infant car seats.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: Open this TQ.

Summary:

On February 7, 2014, Graco Children's Products, Inc. (Graco) submitted an initial Defect Information Report (DIR) to NHTSA describing a safety defect in the harness buckles of more than 3.7 million convertible and booster car seats (see NHTSA Recall No. 14C-001). The DIR stated that Graco had been monitoring buckle performance in its car seats since 2009 and had been providing consumers with cleaning and operation instructions for the buckle, or replacement buckles.

Graco submitted an amended DIR on February 10, 2014 and submitted a second amended DIR on March 7, 2014. In the second amended DIR, Graco expanded the recall population to cover over 4.1 million convertible and booster seats. The second amended DIR indicated that Graco had taken steps in 2012 and 2013 to address what it characterized as a consumer dissatisfaction issue. These measures included developing and twice issuing buckle cleaning instructions, and also extending the warranty on the buckle from one year to a lifetime warranty. Also according to the second amended DIR, in 2012 Graco conducted internal studies and performed testing of a new buckle which was provided to consumers on a case-by-case basis beginning in June 2013. According to Graco's written responses to ODI's information requests, the company was aware of the issue being investigated in EA13-001 and had begun working on developing a modified harness buckle even before ODI's investigation began.

On June 27, 2014, Graco submitted a DIR recalling approximately 1.9 million rear facing infant car seats which used the QT1 harness buckle.

This Timeliness Query has been opened to evaluate the timing of Graco's defect decision making and reporting of the safety defect to NHTSA.