



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 03-039
 Prompted By: OWNER REPORTS
 Date Opened: 08/11/2003 Date Closed: 10/10/2003
 Principal Investigator: ROBERT YOUNG
 Subject: REAR SUSPENSION COLLAPSE

Manufacturer: AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO., INC.
 Products: 2001-2003 HONDA GL1800 GOLD WING Population: 8,196

Problem Description: LOWER CROSS MEMEBER WELDS FAIL, AND CROSS MEMBER SEPARATES. REAR SUSPENSION THEN COLLAPSES.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	8	59	67
Crashes/Fires:	0	0	0
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
# Injuries:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	0	0

*Description of Other:

Action: CLOSE THIS INVESTIGATION. HONDA IS CONDUCTING A SAFETY RECALL OF THE AFFECTED VEHICLES (03V-350).

Engineer: Bob Young

Date: 10/10/2003

Div. Chief: Richard Boyd

Date: 10/10/2003

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 10/10/2003

Summary: The subject motorcycles, introduced with the 2001 model year, utilize an aluminum frame individually welded by Honda employees in the company's Marysville, Ohio assembly plant. ODI opened this investigation after learning that some 2002 model year GL1800's were experiencing rear suspension collapse when the lowest crossmember would completely separate from the frame. It appeared the crossmember was separating due to sub-standard welding of the crossmember to the frame.

On September 4, 2003 Honda briefed ODI staff and advised that the subject weld failures resulted from a combination of production line changes that took effect on March 1, 2002. These changes were: 1) few, if any, reinforcing tig welds applied to the crossmember mig welds; 2) a relatively inexperienced welder began welding frames as of that date; and 3) a less robust weld quality control inspection was introduced. Effective September 11, 2002 Honda addressed these assembly line issues. On September 16, 2003 Honda advised ODI that it was conducting a safety recall of all MY 2002/2003 GL1800's built from March 1, 2002 through September 10, 2002. This is a worldwide recall involving 9,521 motorcycles, of which 8,196 are in the United States. For more information concerning both Honda's September 4th briefing and the recall, please refer to ODI's October 2, 2003 memo.

Based on information provided by Honda concerning the production line changes; the field performance of all 2001-2003 GL1800's; and ODI's independent information gathering activities; the scope of Honda's recall appears justified. ODI will closely monitor subject crossmember weld integrity for bikes built outside the recall scope, as well as the effectiveness of Honda's recall remedy for those bikes within it, and will take additional action if warranted by future developments.

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*Just
placed on
10/15/03*