

## REPORT OF HONDA CR-V ENGINE COMPARTMENT FIRES

WASHINGTON, July 9 (Reuters) - At least 27 Honda (Tokyo:7267.T - News) CR-V sport-utility vehicles from the 2003 and 2004 model years burst into flames shortly after getting their first oil changes, The Washington Post reported on Friday,

No injuries were reported, but many of the vehicles were destroyed, usually with 10,000 miles or fewer on their odometers, the newspaper said, citing records provided to the U.S. government by Honda.

The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration investigated the situation and concluded July 1 that the cases were the fault of dealerships or others who improperly installed oil filters, the newspaper said.

According to the report, NHTSA and American Honda Motor Co. agreed that oil from the filters most likely leaked onto the vehicles' hot exhaust systems, quickly igniting.

"We consulted with Honda. Honda concluded it was a technician's error, and they have taken steps to make sure service technicians who work on this vehicle understand that they need to be particularly diligent when they replace the oil filter," NHTSA spokesman Rae Tyson was quoted as saying.

Honda doesn't know why the fires are happening in only the two most recent CR-V model years and not earlier ones, spokesman Andy Boyd told the newspaper "That's the part we're still investigating," he said.

There were about 140,000 CR-Vs sold in the United States in 2003 and Honda said 22 of them caught fire from the apparent oil filter problem, the Post reported. So far this year, five owners of 2004 CR-Vs have reported such fires to NHTSA, the newspaper said.

### CAUSE OF FIRES

Ed McCabe, Senior Investigator  
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Relative to the cause of the oil filter leakage caused fires on the CR-V: We have investigated three of these fires that occurred shortly after the vehicle's first oil change and can report with

certainty that the fires were caused by oil leakage from the oil filter as the result of the failure of the mechanic to notice that the neoprene gasket from the original oil filter did not come off with the filter when he removed it - the flat rubber gasket stayed on the filter base. The mechanic then installed a new filter - with gasket - over the gasket from the original filter.

In each of the cases we investigated the original gasket had been left on the filter base - double gaskets do not last long before blowing out.

The problem is that the gaskets are being held to the engine by factory engine paint - Honda paints the engines after the oil filter is installed. The problem is far worse on the new CR-V because the filter base is very hard to see and the person changing the filter doesn't notice that the gasket was not on the filter when he removed it.

Honda has been put on notice by my clients on each of these claims, but apparently still do not realize what the problem is. Ed McCabe

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