

Part 573 Safety Recall Report

16C-007

Manufacturer Name : Evenflo Company, Inc.

Submission Date : SEP 06, 2016

NHTSA Recall No. : 16C-007

Manufacturer Recall No. : NR



Manufacturer Information :

Manufacturer Name : Evenflo Company, Inc.

Address : 225 BYERS ROAD

MIAMISBURG OH 45342

Company phone : 937-415-3300

Population :

Number of potentially involved : 29,742

Estimated percentage with defect : 100 %

Child Restraint Information :

Make 1 : EVENFLO

Model : EVOLVE 3-IN-1 COMBINATION BOOSTER SEAT

Seat Type : BOOSTER SEAT

Model No. : 34411700

Platform Name / No. : NR

Brand Name : EVENFLO

Descriptive Information : For children 22-120 lbs., this seat can be used as a (i) a forward-facing harnessed booster (22-65 lbs. and 28-50 in.), (ii) a high-back, belt-positioning booster (40-120 lbs. and 43-57 in.), and finally (iii) a no-back, belt-positioning booster (40-120 lbs.). This report only impacts use of the seat in the initial harnessed mode.

Production Dates : FEB 26, 2015 - FEB 09, 2016

Make 2 : EVENFLO

Model : EVOLVE 3-IN-1 COMBINATION BOOSTER SEAT

Seat Type : BOOSTER SEAT

Model No. : 34411741

Platform Name / No. : NR

Brand Name : EVENFLO

Descriptive Information : For children 22-120 lbs., this seat can be used as a (i) a forward-facing harnessed booster (22-65 lbs. and 28-50 in.), (ii) a high-back, belt-positioning booster (40-120 lbs. and 43-57 in.), and finally (iii) a no-back, belt-positioning booster (40-120 lbs.). This report only impacts use of the seat in the initial harnessed mode.

Production Dates : MAY 27, 2015 - FEB 09, 2016

Description of Defect :

Description of the Defect : The Evolve has a harness adjustment button located underneath a small plastic shield between the child-occupant's legs. This harness adjustment button allows for fine-tuning of the harness so that a caregiver can safely tighten the harness around the child before vehicular travel and loosen it at the conclusion of a trip, thereby also permitting a child to gain ingress and egress from the seat. Field data over the last six months suggests that a small number of children have intentionally gained access sufficient to activate the Evolve's harness adjustment button and loosen the harness.

FMVSS 1 : NR

FMVSS 2 : NR

Description of the Safety Risk : No injuries have been reported as a result of this circumstance. Nevertheless, for the Evolve to provide safe restraint in harnessed mode, the harness must fit snugly around the child-occupant. Field data informs the company that some children have been able to activate the Evolve's harness adjustment button and simultaneously loosen the harness. A loosened harness may increase the likelihood of injury in a vehicular crash.

Description of the Cause : The Evolve's harness adjustment button can be accessed and activated by a child, similar to the situation with the Transitions' Central Front Adjustment (CFA), for which Evenflo conducted a voluntary recall in February 2016. There are several factors, not simply one component or design aspect, contributing to this condition. In fact, any one factor standing alone does not create an unreasonable safety risk. At the time of the Transitions recall, Evenflo holistically reviewed its seats, including the Evolve, and concluded there was no child access issue. Analysis of field data after the Transitions recall suggests, however, that reports of children activating the Evolve's harness adjustment button and loosening the harness are occurring at a rate where prudence dictates that Evenflo take action.

The factors contributing to this situation are:

(1) The seating surface includes a plastic shield between the child's legs, which some children are overcoming to access the harness adjustment button. No other seat utilizes this plastic shield, which may be attracting a small number of children to discover what is underneath, rather than deterring access to the harness adjustment button, as originally intended.

(2) While the distance between the Evolve's harness adjustment button and the child is greater than the distance between the harness' CFA and the child on the recalled Transitions, the Evolve's harness adjustment button is still positioned closer to the child than other models. Less distance between the child and the mechanism used to adjust the harness may equate to higher potential for child access and possible loosening of the harness.

(3) The harness adjustment button on the Evolve is pull-style, while all other Evenflo models are push-style. This pull-style button, along with the shorter distance between child and harness adjustment button and the apparent attraction of the plastic shield to some children, cumulatively creates potential for a loose harness.

Identification of Any Warning A year and a half of field data confirms that the Evolve's small plastic shield

that can Occur : functions as designed to deter the vast majority of children from gaining access to the harness adjustment button. Essentially, if a child shows no inclination to access the harness adjustment button, then the Evolve may be used safely until a remedy kit is installed. Also, if a caregiver observes a child reaching around the shield in attempt to gain access to the harness adjustment button and the child is at least 40 lbs. and 43 inches, then the Evolve can be used as a high-back, belt-positioning booster until a remedy kit can be installed. Only in the event that (1) the child does not meet the size requirements for use of the seat as a belt-positioning booster, and (2) the child has a demonstrated interest in accessing and activating the harness adjustment button, then the seat should not be used until a remedy kit is installed. Of course, many older children who use a booster seat have the strength and dexterity to activate the vast majority of harness adjustment mechanisms available on child restraints in the market today, so care should always be taken to teach children that the harness adjustment mechanism is not a toy and must not be activated in order to help keep them safe.

Supplier Identification :

Component Manufacturer

Name : NR

Address : NR

NR

Country : NR

Chronology :

In late February 2016, Evenflo conducted a voluntary recall of the Transitions booster seat because a small number of children were gaining access to that seat's central front adjuster (CFA) and loosening the harness. At that time, Evenflo conscientiously conducted a survey of other seats to ensure this phenomenon was not occurring elsewhere. Indeed, engineering analysis and a review of field data contemporaneous to that recall confirmed that only Transitions seats were impacted by the issue. (At that time, there was only one such claim related to the Evolve).

Following the Transitions recall, however, Evenflo noted an increase in feedback from Evolve consumers claiming that their children were overcoming the Evolve's small plastic shield and loosening the harness. There had been no such trend in these complaints prior to the announcement about Transitions. Initially, therefore, Evenflo attributed the small spike in complaints to recall attention alone. Evenflo's research and the lack of any trend in complaints confirmed that the Evolve did not have an issue similar to Transitions. Still, Evenflo prudently continued to monitor Evolve field data in the months that followed. The trend is not abating, as Evenflo has received 27 complaints that children have loosened their Evolve harnesses. Consequently, Evenflo submits this Part 573 report.

Description of Remedy :

Description of Remedy Program : The company will provide written notice to its registered consumers of this recall. In addition, Evenflo will ship a remedy kit to consumers upon request. The free remedy kit will contain a replacement harness adjustment button and a Phillips-head installation screw, as well as instructions for installation—in English, French and Spanish. The kit will curtail any child-occupant access and activation of the harness adjustment button. Indeed, field data tells us that the change from pull-style to push-style harness adjustment button alone has eliminated the concern for consumers that have experienced the issue and reported it to the company. Of course, Evenflo also will support the campaign via its website and social media outlets with information, instructions, frequently asked questions and an instructional video, as well as providing live support via telephone at its ParentLink Consumer Resource Center.

How Remedy Component Differs from Recalled Component : The remedy kit includes a push-style harness adjustment button, rather than a pull-style harness adjustment button. (Both styles are used by Evenflo and other manufacturers). This change in activation method alters the access angle for the child in this particular seat dramatically and effectively eliminates the child's ability to activate the harness adjustment button without adult assistance.

Identify How/When Recall Condition was Corrected in Production : As part of the correction to new production in the Transitions recall, Evenflo replaced the pull-style CFA on Transitions seats. Because the Evolve's pull-style harness adjustment button would then have been the only remaining pull-style mechanism used across all of Evenflo harnessed seat platforms, economies of scale suggested a change should also be made to the Evolve at that time. The company was not going to purchase pull-style for only one car seat in its entire line-up of harnessed child restraints. Accordingly, as of February 9, 2016, the Evolve's pull-style harness adjustment button was replaced with a push-style button and the model numbers were updated. Following this change, the trend of complaints for this issue has concluded.

Recall Schedule :

Description of Recall Schedule : In conjunction with this report, Evenflo is submitting a proposed Part 577 notification letter. Once the letter is approved by NHTSA, the company will undertake preparation of the mailing. As for retailers, the number of Evolve seats impacted by this issue in retailer inventories is nominal. Regardless, Evenflo proposes notifying them the day prior to Evenflo's public announcement of the recall. The company will also be providing retailers with a recall poster to be displayed in stores. Finally, as we have done in the past, Evenflo would like to coordinate with NHTSA so that the agency and the company post public notices on their respective websites simultaneously. (Evenflo is also notifying Transport Canada of this issue on one Evolve model number impacted in Canada and would like to coordinate timing with that agency as well). Evenflo plans to announce the recall via press release, website notice and social media messaging.

Planned Dealer Notification Date : SEP 12, 2016 - SEP 13, 2016

Planned Owner Notification Date : SEP 26, 2016 - OCT 07, 2016

Purchaser Information :

The following manufacturers purchased this defective/noncompliant equipment for possible use or installation in new motor vehicles or new items of motor vehicle equipment:

Name : NR

Address : NR

NR

Country : NR

Company Phone : NR

* NR - Not Reported