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Britax Recalls 14,220 Child Restraints for Harness Flaw

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[Britax Child Safety](#) is recalling 14,220 child restraints because the shoulder harness may not hold the child, according to a document posted Saturday on the Web site of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. A further 3,600 seats are being recalled in Canada.

The recall comes about nine months after Britax made a manufacturing change to correct the defect.



Britax Child Safety Incorporated Chaperone infant car seat.

After learning of a safety problem, a manufacturer is supposed to notify the agency within five business days of its plan for a recall or face civil penalties. The letter sent by Britax to the safety agency was dated Jan. 26. Asked to explain the nine-month gap, the company said it did not delay notifying the agency.

Mariana Mack, a company spokeswoman, wrote in an e-mail that the appropriate manufacturing change was made by the seat supplier, Laredo, a Chinese company. "Once we completed the risk assessment and determined the population of seats affected, we alerted N.H.T.S.A. voluntarily," she wrote.

Britax said it began to receive complaints from consumers in March and, by the end of April, had determined "the likely cause of the defect and the production affected."

In the document, Britax identified Chaperone infant car seats built from Sept. 1, 2010, to May 1, 2011. The model numbers of the affected seats are E9L692J, E9L692K, E9L692L and E9L692M.

Britax said the problem had been traced to a defective aluminum rivet intended to secure the harness-strap adjuster to the seat. That adjuster ensures a snug fit for the straps that are placed over the child's shoulders.

If the rivet breaks or is dislodged, the harness adjuster can detach from the seat, allowing the straps to loosen and not properly secure the child, Britax told the agency.

Britax said it was not aware of any injuries related to the problem and had received 57 complaints from the United States and three from Canada.

In another recent action, Mazda told the safety agency that it would recall about 52,000 Tribute crossovers from 2001-2 because a brake fluid leak could cause a fire. This month, Ford [recalled about 244,000 Escapes](#) from the same model years for an identical problem. The Escape is a mechanical sibling of the Tribute.

Britax and Mazda described their recalls as voluntary, but once a manufacturer is aware of a safety problem, [it has no choice](#) but to notify the government of its plan for a recall.