

Communication 9

NB: out of respect, the names and email addresses of recipients may be redacted.

Sent on:

December 3, 2018

Sent from:

Henrik Moller

Sent/copied to:

NZTA representatives

Flip The Fleet authors team

Subject line:

RE: NZT-3378 RESPONSE

Attachment:

none

Body of the email:

Dear Brett Aldridge

Thank you for your safety assessment concerning the Nissan Leaf brake failures.

It is a relief that the Nissan Leaf's stopping performance when in brake 'assist mode' is within New Zealand Warrant of Fitness expectations. **Can you please now urgently confirm that NZTA therefore concludes that the Nissan Leafs manufactured between 2013 and 2016 are safe to drive.**

Your covering letter refers just to the regenerative braking system. Is this a mistake?

If you are indeed now concluding that the vehicles are safe, it is important for us to understand your explicit rationale used to interpret the results. e.g. have you taken into account to surprise factor and consequent delay in reaction time in your assessment of the overall safety of the braking system should the failure happen? Confidence in your assurance will be increased if a detailed rationale is made public.

Earlier we offered to relay the responses from drivers to our online log book of brake failure events. Do you want this information or have you now made your final decision without it?

If you confirm that your conclusion is that the cars are safe, we will now immediately advise owners and our participants of your judgement and work as hard as we can to educate our drivers about what to do in the case of brake failure. Our dilemma here is that at least three immediate reactions to failure have been reported by respondents and we do not know which to advise as the most prudent. i.e. (a) some report the lack of braking at the top of the brake pedal stroke and the need to slam the pedal right to the bottom to arrest the car (this was also our initial advice before receiving the cases); (b) others have reported depressing the pedal and finding no brakes, but then released the pedal and pumped it again to have the brakes engage; and (c) a third pattern is to find a completely stiff brake pedal which apparently cannot be forced to the floor, in which case a complete release of the pedal is needed before trying again. Your report emphasises that the driver must not pump the brakes as this will increase the stopping distance. Which of these two main

reactions would you now advise them to try first: slam the pedal to the floor or release the brake pedal and try again?

You “strongly encourage owners of any vehicle with suspected technical faults, such as brake failure, to take their vehicle to their nearest dealer for testing as soon as possible”. Please explain how this could possibly safeguard a driver or the public when this is a fault that comes out of the blue, apparently with no warning. How could a dealer possibly advise if the vehicle is safe or likely to suffer brake failure related to a manufacturing fault? If a fault has occurred already, a TDC code will be recorded, but we do not even know if a vehicle that has suffered such a failure is more or equally likely than any other in the same make and model to suffer one again. And should a dealer have any grounds for concern, what can they do to mitigate the risk when Nissan either (a) are apparently unwilling to make a firmware C upgrade available, or (b) no upgrade is available?

We will now post a digest of the 17 cases of brake failure from New Zealand reported to us over the past week so that their personal testimony can help build that preparedness.

We will also keep the online brake failure logbook going and advise you from time to time of any reports received.

Yours sincerely

Henrik Moller

(for Daniel Myall, Dima Ivanov, Donald Love, Joe Barnett, Mark Mixon and Walter Larason)