



Applies To: **1997-98 Accord** – See VEHICLES AFFECTED  
**1996-98 Prelude** – See VEHICLES AFFECTED  
**1997-98 Odyssey** – See VEHICLES AFFECTED

March 27, 2001

## Safety Recall: Lower Ball Joints

(Supersedes 99-039, dated June 29, 1999)

### BACKGROUND

Certain vehicles were manufactured with front suspension lower ball joints that may prematurely wear out. In the worst case, the ball joints would separate without prior warning, causing the front suspension to collapse.

### VEHICLES AFFECTED

1997 Accord (4-door, 4-cylinder only)	
Beginning VIN	Ending VIN
1HGCD5...VA243517	1HGCD5...VA243816
1HGCD5...VA267121	1HGCD5...VA267121
1HGCD5...VA272648	1HGCD5...VA275399
1HGCD5...VA275639	1HGCD5...VA280294
JHMCD5...VC021143	JHMCD5...VC022004
Not every vehicle in the above VIN ranges is affected by this recall. Before beginning work on a vehicle, verify that it is eligible with one or more of the following.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The customer has a recall notification.</li> <li>The vehicle is listed on your campaign responsibility report.</li> <li>The vehicle is shown as eligible when you do a VIN status inquiry on DCS.</li> </ul>	

1998 Accord		
4-cyl	Beginning VIN	Ending VIN
4-door DX	1HGCF8...WA000036	1HGCF8...WA003281
4-door LX, EX	1HGCG5...WA000001	1HGCG5...WA006161
4-door ULEV	1HGCG6...WA000002	1HGCG6...WA004858
2-door V6	1HGCG3...WA000001	1HGCG3...WA000037
4-door	1HGCG1...WA000001	1HGCG1...WA001373
2-door	1HGCG2...WA000001	1HGCG2...WA000048

Prelude		
	Beginning VIN	Ending VIN
1996 S	JHMBA8...TC001965	JHMBA8...TC002612
1996 Si	JHMBB2...TC004209	JHMBB2...TC005917
1996 VTEC	JHMBB1...TC000817	JHMBB1...TC001163
1997	ALL	
1998	JHMBB6...WC000001	JHMBB6...WC009167

Odyssey		
	Beginning VIN	Ending VIN
1997	JHMRA1...VC021142	JHMRA1...VC022232
1998	JHMRA3...WC000001	JHMRA3...WC000650

### CUSTOMER NOTIFICATION

All owners of affected vehicles will be mailed a notification of this recall. An example of the customer notification is at the end of this service bulletin.

### CORRECTIVE ACTION

Replace the front suspension lower ball joints.

### PARTS INFORMATION

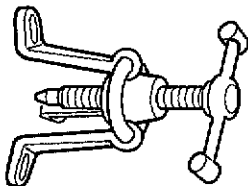
Ball Joint Kit, Accord and Odyssey:  
P/N 04510-S84-000, H/C 6194054

Ball Joint Kit, Prelude:  
P/N 04510-SL5-000, H/C 6194039

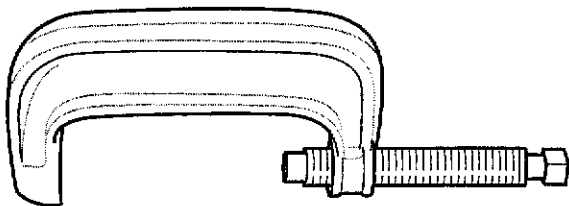
## REQUIRED SPECIAL TOOLS

Heavy-Duty Hub Puller: Snap-on P/N CJ-129  
Old Forge P/N 2518

NOTE: Heavy-duty hub pullers can be purchased through the Honda Tool and Equipment Program at (888) 424-6857.



C-Frame Tool: OTC P/N 7248



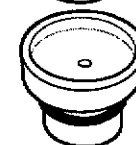
## Ball Joint Remover/Installer Tool Set:

The individual tools do not have tool numbers; **each tool is stamped with a letter for reference.**

**REMOVER/INSTALLER ADAPTER (A)**  
All models



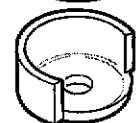
**BASE INSTALLER ADAPTER (B)**  
2.5TL/3.2TL and 3.5RL only  
(Apply grease to O-ring before each use.)



**BASE REMOVER ADAPTER (C)**  
(or equivalent, T/N 07GAF-SD40310)  
3.2TL and 3.5RL only



**BASE REMOVER ADAPTER (D)**  
2.5TL only



**BASE INSTALLER ADAPTER (E)**  
2.2CL/2.3CL/3.0CL only  
(Apply grease to O-ring before each use.)



**BASE REMOVER ADAPTER (F)**  
(or equivalent, T/N 07HAF-SF10130)  
2.2CL/2.3CL/3.0CL only



**PILOT ADAPTER (G)**  
All models  
(Apply grease to O-ring before each use.)



**REMOVER/INSTALLER PILOT ADAPTER (H)**  
All models



## WARRANTY CLAIM INFORMATION

OP#	Description	FRT	Template ID
415131	Replace lower ball joints, 1997 Accord	1.4	99-039A
415131	Replace lower ball joints, 1998 Accord	1.2	99-039B
415132	Replace lower ball joints, Odyssey	1.4	99-039C
415133	Replace lower ball joints, Prelude	1.2	99-039D

Failed Part: Accord, Odyssey  
P/N 04510-S84-000  
H/C 6194054  
Prelude  
P/N 04510-SL5-000  
H/C 6194039

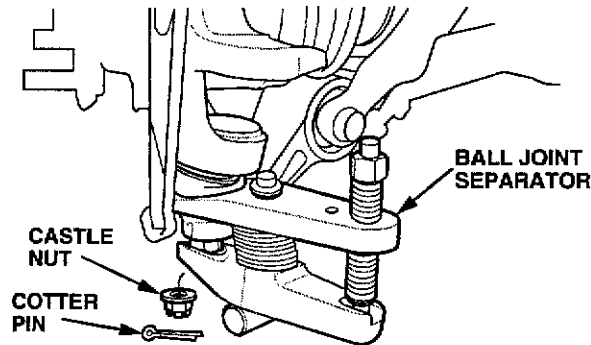
Defect Code: 297  
Contention Code: K59  
Skill Level: Repair Technician

## REPAIR PROCEDURE

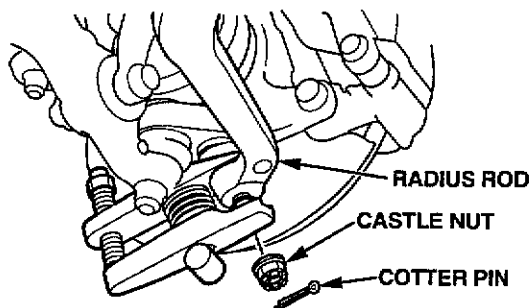
NOTE: Wear eye protection during the entire procedure.

### Ball Joint Removal

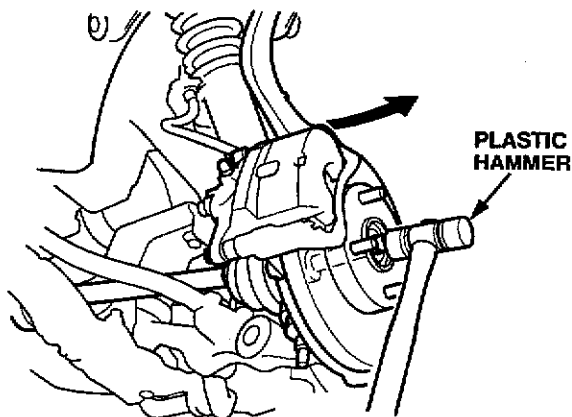
1. Raise the vehicle on a hoist. Remove the front wheels.
2. Remove and discard the spindle nut.
3. Remove the cotter pin and castle nut from the lower ball joint. Discard the cotter pin.



4. Separate the lower control arm from the ball joint with the special tool. **To avoid damaging the ABS sensor harness, do not let the knuckle hang by its weight.**
5. *Prelude Type SH only:* Separate the radius rod from the ball joint with the special tool. Take care not to damage the boot. Replace the boot if it is damaged during separation.

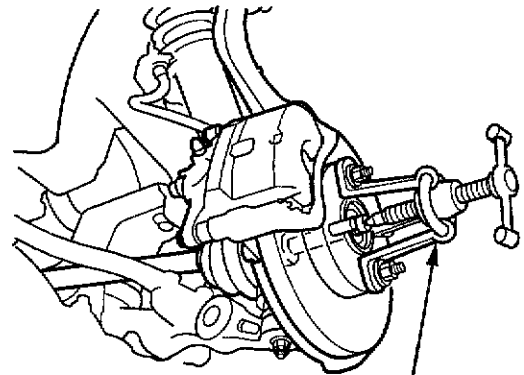


6. Remove the axle from the front wheel hub. If the axle is stuck to the hub, go to step 7. If the axle comes out easily, go to step 10.



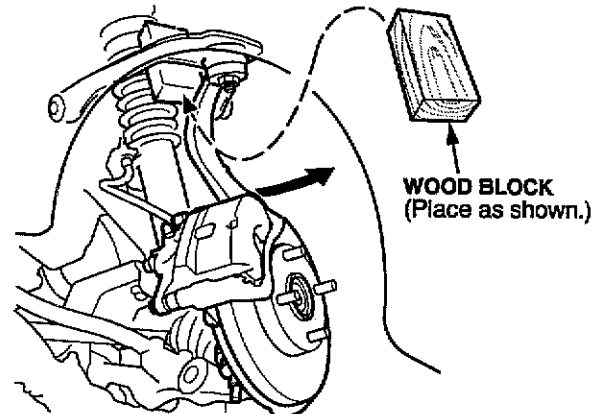
7. Reinstall the knuckle on the lower control arm and loosely install the castle nut.

8. Using a heavy-duty hub puller, free the axle from the hub. Do not press it all the way out.



Use Snap-on P/N CJ-129, Old Forge P/N 2518, or equivalent.

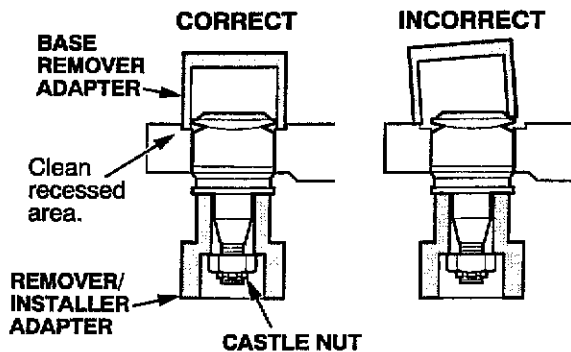
9. Remove the castle nut, lift and support the knuckle (to prevent damaging the ABS sensor wire harness), and press the axle out of the hub.
10. Lift the knuckle, then place a block of wood (about 2-3/4" x 1-1/2" by 5") between the upper control arm and the damper assembly.



11. Remove the boot from the lower ball joint.

12. *1997 Accord and all Odyssey only:* Remove the brake caliper mounting bolts and the caliper. Remove the four flange bolts, then remove the brake rotor/hub assembly.

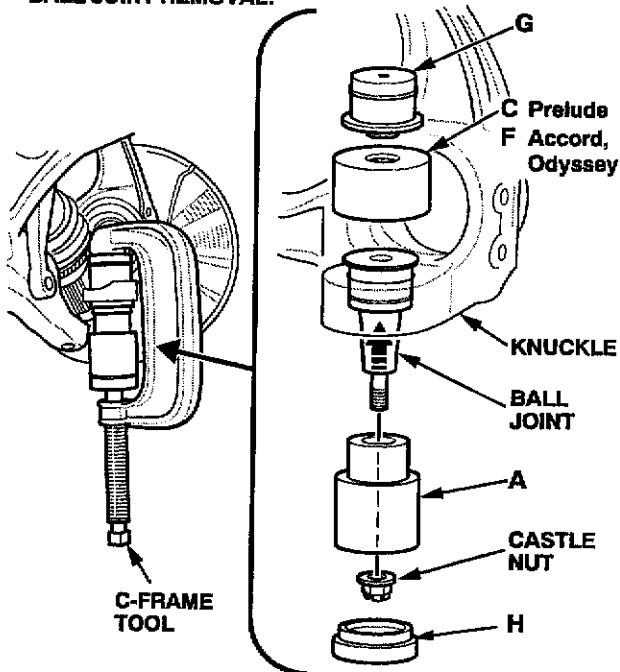
13. Clean the recessed area around the ball joint with solvent and compressed air, then install the base remover adapter (Tool C or F).



14. Hold the remover installer adapter (Tool A) up to the ball joint, then install the castle nut to hold it in place. Install the remaining special tools on the lower ball joint and the knuckle. **To avoid damaging the special tools, verify that they are correct for the vehicle you are working on and are aligned properly.**

NOTE: On the Prelude Type SH, make sure you are removing the ball joint that connects to the lower control arm. Do not remove the ball joint that connects to the radius rod.

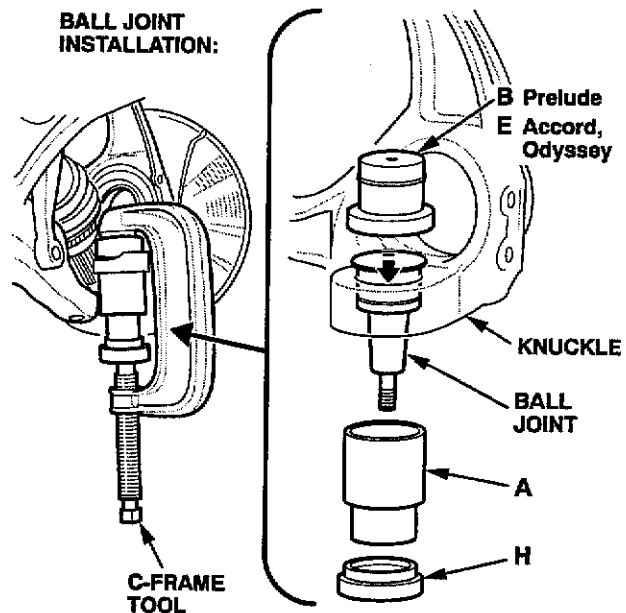
#### BALL JOINT REMOVAL:



15. Tighten the C-frame and press the lower ball joint out of the knuckle.

#### Ball Joint Installation

16. Position the new ball joint in the knuckle. Do not remove the boot from the ball joint.
17. Install the special tools on the ball joint and the knuckle.



18. Tighten the C-frame and press the ball joint into the knuckle.
19. *1997 Accord and all Odyssey only:* Reinstall the brake rotor/hub assembly. Torque the flange bolts to 44 N·m (33 lb-ft). Reinstall the brake caliper. Torque the mounting bolts to 108 N·m (80 lb-ft).
20. Apply wheel bearing grease to the axle splines.
21. Remove the wooden block, then install the axle into the hub. **To avoid damaging the ABS sensor harness, do not let the knuckle hang by its weight.**
22. Distribute the grease inside the ball joint by moving the ball joint stud left-and-right and back-and-forth about ten times. Then rotate the stud in a circle several times.
23. Install the lower control arm onto the ball joint.
24. Install the ball joint castle nut. Torque the nut to 49-59 N·m (36-43 lb-ft). Install the new cotter pin.
25. *Prelude Type SH only:* Reinstall the radius rod to the ball joint. Torque the castle nut to 69-78 N·m (51-58 lb-ft).
26. Apply oil to the threads and flange of the new spindle nut. Install the new spindle nut; torque it to 245 N·m (181 lb-ft).
27. Stake the spindle nut.
28. Repeat steps 2 through 27 on the other side.
29. Reinstall the front wheels. Tighten the wheel nuts to 108 N·m (80 lb-ft).
30. Lower the vehicle.

31. Center-punch a completion mark above the fourth character of the engine compartment VIN.

Center-punch here.

1HGCXXXXXXXXXXXXX

**Example of Customer Letter**

May 1999

**Safety Recall: Lower Ball Joints**

Dear Honda Owner:

This notice is sent to you in accordance with the requirements of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act.

**What is the reason for this notice?**

Honda Motor Co., Ltd. has determined that a defect relating to motor vehicle safety exists in certain Honda automobiles. Some vehicles were manufactured with front suspension lower ball joints that may prematurely wear out. In the worst case, the ball joint would separate without prior warning, causing the front suspension to collapse. This condition would result in vehicle deceleration and a sudden loss of power. Also, steering controllability would be reduced, and a vehicle crash could occur.

**What should you do?**

Call any authorized Honda automobile dealer and make an appointment to have your vehicle repaired. They will replace the front lower ball joints. *This repair will be done free of charge.* Parts are now available. The repair takes about two hours, but please plan to leave your vehicle at the dealer all day to allow them scheduling flexibility.

**Who to contact if you experience problems.**

If you are not satisfied with the service you receive from your Honda dealer, you may write to:

American Honda Motor Co., Inc.  
Honda Consumer Affairs Dept.  
Mail Stop 500-2N-7D  
1919 Torrance Blvd.  
Torrance, CA 90501-2746

If you believe that American Honda or the dealer has failed or is unable to remedy the defect in your vehicle, without charge, within a reasonable period of time (60 days from the date you first contact the dealer for a repair appointment), you may submit a complaint to:

Administrator  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
400 Seventh St., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Or call the toll-free Auto Safety Hotline at (800) 424-9393. Residents of Washington D.C. should call (202) 366-0123.

**What to do if you feel this notice is in error.**

This notice was mailed to you according to the most current information we have available. If you no longer own this vehicle, or some information in this notice is incorrect, please fill out and return the included, postage-paid *Information Change Card*. This will help us to update our records.

**If you have questions.**

If you have questions about this notice, or need assistance with contacting a Honda dealer, please call the Honda Consumer Affairs Department at (800) 999-1009.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you.

Sincerely,

**AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO., INC.**  
Honda Automobile Division