



Applies To: **1996–98 3.5RL** – See VEHICLES AFFECTED  
**1996–98 2.5TL/3.2TL** – See VEHICLES AFFECTED  
**1997–98 2.2CL/2.3CL/3.0CL** – See VEHICLES AFFECTED

March 26, 2001

## Safety Recall: Lower Ball Joints (Supersedes 99-023, dated June 15, 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

3.5RL		
MY	Beginning VIN	Ending VIN
1996	ALL	
1997	ALL	
1998	JH4KA9...WC000001	JH4KA9...WC007053

2.5TL		
MY	Beginning VIN	Ending VIN
1996	JH4UA2...TC021065	JH4UA2...TC025075
1997	ALL	
1998	JH4UA2...WC000001	JH4UA2...WC006036

3.2TL		
MY	Beginning VIN	Ending VIN
1996	JH4UA3...TC012319	JH4UA3...TC014540
1997	ALL	
1998	JH4UA3...WC000001	JH4UA3...WC008112

2.2CL/2.3CL		
MY	Beginning VIN	Ending VIN
1997	19UYA1...VL023878	19UYA1...VL023878
	19UYA1...VL024293	19UYA1...VL024652
1998	19UYA3...WL000001	19UYA3...WL000022

3.0CL		
MY	Beginning VIN	Ending VIN
1997	19UYA2...VL018057	19UYA2...VL018057
	19UYA2...VL018439	19UYA2...VL019398
	19UYA2...VL019402	19UYA2...VL019402
1998	19UYA2...WL000001	19UYA2...WL000013

### 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, 3.5RL: P/N 04510-SZ3-000

Ball Joint Kit, 2.5/3.2TL: P/N 04510-SL5-000

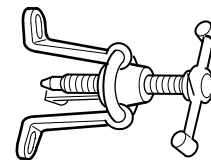
Ball Joint Kit, 2.2/2.3/3.0CL: P/N 04510-S84-000

Front Knuckle Ring, 3.5RL & 3.2TL:  
 P/N 51212-SP0-000

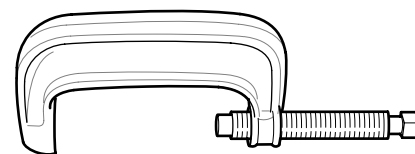
### REQUIRED SPECIAL TOOLS

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

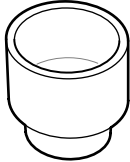


**CUSTOMER INFORMATION:** The information in this bulletin is intended for use only by skilled technicians who have the proper tools, equipment, and training to correctly and safely maintain your vehicle. These procedures should not be attempted by “do-it-yourselfers,” and you should not assume this bulletin applies to your vehicle, or that your vehicle has the condition described. To determine whether this information applies, contact an authorized Acura automobile dealer.

**Ball Joint Remover/Installer Tool Set:**

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

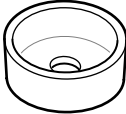
**REMOVER/INSTALLER ADAPTER (A)**  
All models



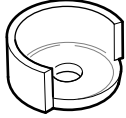
**BASE INSTALLER ADAPTER (B)**  
2.5TL/3.2TL and 3.5RL only  
(Apply grease to O-ring before each use.)



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



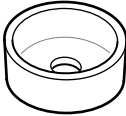
**BASE REMOVER ADAPTER (D)**  
2.5TL only



**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



Driver: T/N 07749-0010000

Bearing Driver Attachment, 78 x 90 mm:  
T/N 07GAD-SD40101

**WARRANTY CLAIM INFORMATION**

OP#	Description	FRT	Template ID
415131	Replace lower ball joints, 2.2/2.3/3.0CL	1.4	99-023A
415132	Replace lower ball joints, 2.5TL	1.4	99-023B
415133	Replace lower ball joints, 3.2TL	1.2	99-023C
415136	Replace lower ball joints, 3.5RL	1.2	99-023D

Failed Part: 3.5RL - P/N 04510-SZ3-000  
2.5/3.2TL - P/N 04510-SL5-000  
2.2/2.3/3.0CL - P/N 04510-S84-000

Defect Code: 297

Contention Code: K61

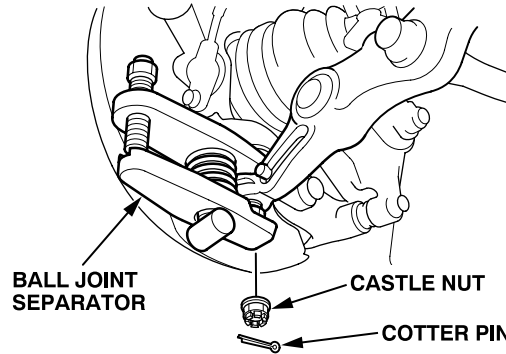
Skill Level: Repair Technician

**REPAIR PROCEDURE**

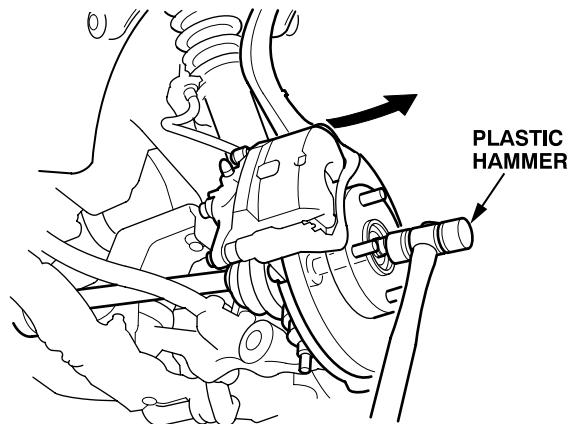
NOTE: Wear eye protection during the entire procedure.

**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.

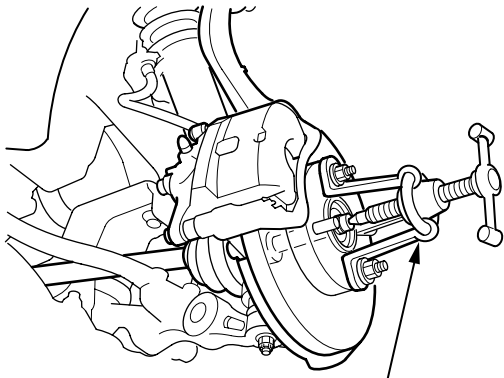


4. Separate the lower control arm from the ball joint with the special tool. **To avoid damaging the ABS sensor harness, do not let the knuckle hang by its weight.**
5. Remove the axle from the front wheel hub. If the axle is stuck to the hub, go to step 6. If the axle comes out easily, go to step 9.



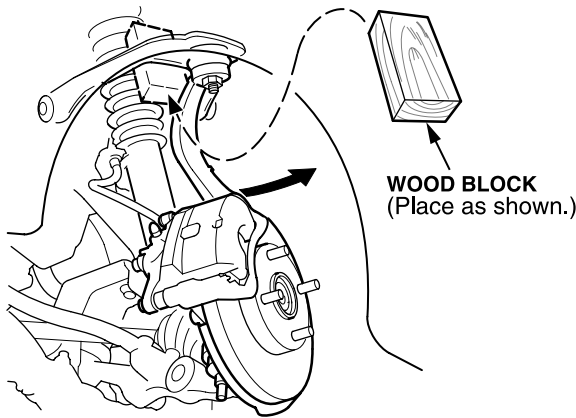
6. Reinstall the knuckle on the lower control arm and loosely install the castle nut.

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

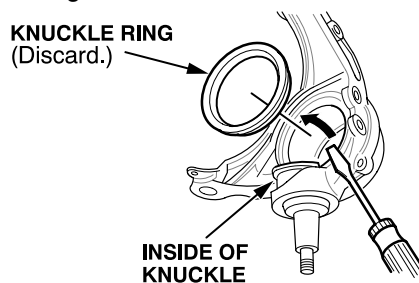


Use Snap-on P/N CJ-129,  
Old Forge P/N 2518, or equivalent.

8. 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.
9. Lift the knuckle, then place a block of wood (about 2-3/4" x 1-1/2" x 5") between the upper control arm and the damper assembly.

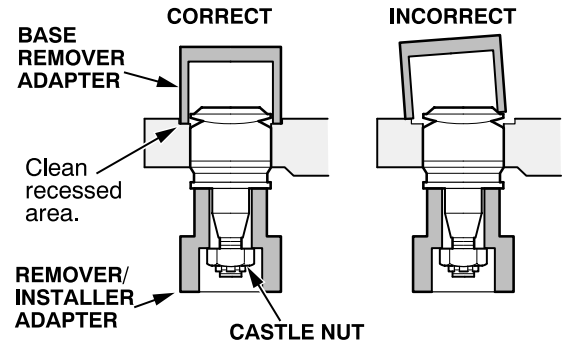


10. Remove the boot from the lower ball joint.
11. *3.5RL and 3.2TL only*: Remove and discard the knuckle ring.

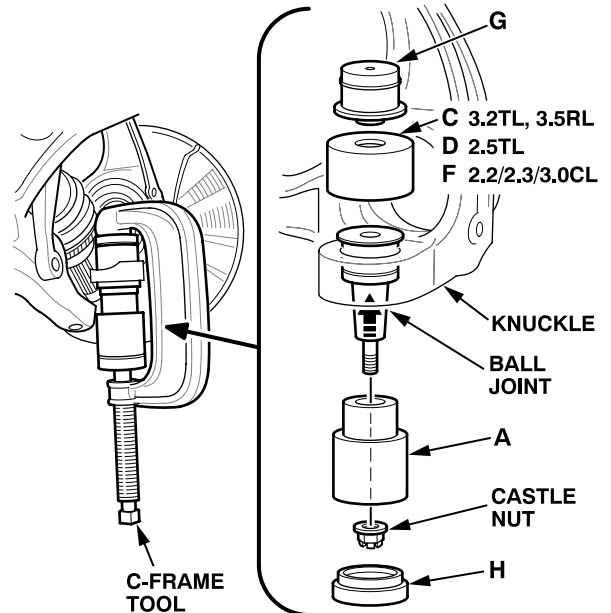


12. *2.5TL and CL only*: Remove the brake caliper mounting bolts and the caliper. Remove the four flange bolts, then remove the brake rotor/hub assembly.

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



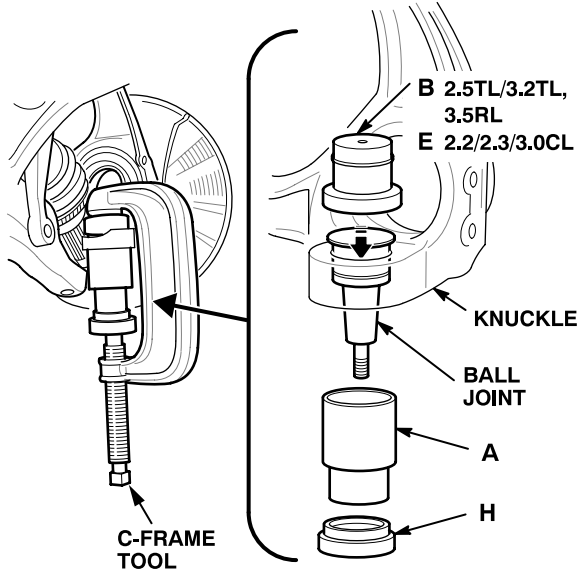
14. Hold the remover installer adapter (Tool A) up to the ball joint, then install the castle nut to hold it in place. Install the remaining special tools on the lower ball joint and the knuckle. **To avoid damaging the special tools, verify that they are correct for the vehicle you are working on and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



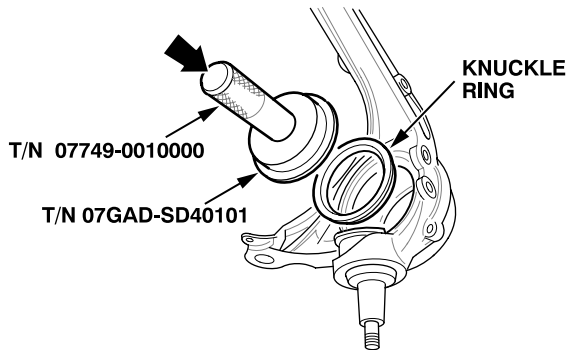
15. Tighten the C-frame and press the lower ball joint out of the knuckle.

## Ball Joint Installation

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



- Tighten the C-frame and press the ball joint into the knuckle.
- 3.5RL and 3.2TL only:* Install a new knuckle ring.

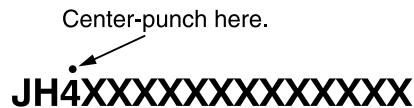


- 2.5TL and CL only:* Reinstall the brake rotor/hub assembly. Torque the flange bolts to 44 N·m (33 lb-ft). Reinstall the brake caliper. Torque the mounting bolts to 108 N·m (80 lb-ft).
- Apply wheel bearing grease to the axle splines.
- Remove the wooden block, then install the axle into the hub. **To avoid damaging the ABS sensor harness, do not let the knuckle hang by its weight.**
- 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.
- Install the lower control arm onto the ball joint.

- Install and torque the ball joint castle nut. Install the new cotter pin.

	Torque
3.5RL	69-78 N·m (51-58 lb-ft)
3.2TL	69-78 N·m (51-58 lb-ft)
2.5TL	49-59 N·m (36-43 lb-ft)
2.2/2.3/3.0CL	39-47 N·m (29-35 lb-ft)

- 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).
- Stake the spindle nut.
- Repeat steps 2 through 27 on the other side.
- Reinstall the front wheels. Tighten the wheel nuts to 108 N·m (80 lb-ft).
- Lower the vehicle.
- Center-punch a completion mark above the third character of the engine compartment VIN.



**Example of Customer Letter**

May 1999

**Safety Recall: Lower Ball Joints**

Dear Acura 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 Acura 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 Acura 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 Acura dealer, you may write to:

American Honda Motor Co., Inc.  
Acura Client Services Dept.  
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 Acura dealer, please call the Acura Client Services Department at (800) 382-2238.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you.

Sincerely,

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