



Department of Justice

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AT
(202) 514-2007
TTY (866) 544-5309

YAMADA MANUFACTURING CO. AGREES TO PLEAD GUILTY TO PRICE FIXING AND BID RIGGING ON AUTOMOBILE PARTS INSTALLED IN U.S. CARS

Company Agrees to Pay \$2.5 Million Criminal Fine

WASHINGTON – Yamada Manufacturing Co. Ltd. has agreed to plead guilty and to pay a \$2.5 million criminal fine for its role in a conspiracy to fix prices and rig bids for manual (non-electric or non-hydraulic-powered) steering columns installed in cars sold in the United States and elsewhere, the Department of Justice announced today.

According to a one-count felony charge filed today in U.S. District Court of the Southern District of Ohio in Cincinnati, Yamada Manufacturing, based in Kiryu City, Gunma Prefecture, Japan, conspired to rig bids and fix prices of steering columns sold to certain subsidiaries of Honda Motor Co. Ltd. in the United States and elsewhere. According to the charge, Yamada carried out the conspiracy from at least as early as the fall of 2007 and continuing until as late as September 2012. Yamada Manufacturing has agreed to cooperate in the department's ongoing investigation. The plea agreement is subject to court approval.

“Yamada’s collusion deprived Honda and its U.S. customers the benefits of freely set prices for manual steering columns, a simple but necessary auto part,” said Assistant Attorney General Bill Baer of the Justice Department’s Antitrust Division. “Companies that conspire to undermine competition and harm U.S. consumers will continue to be held accountable for their crimes.”

According to the charge, Yamada Manufacturing, and others participating in the scheme, conspired through a meeting and conversations in which they discussed and agreed upon bids and price quotations to be submitted to Honda. Based on those discussions, Yamada Manufacturing and its co-conspirators sold steering columns to Honda at collusive and non-competitive prices and employed measures to keep their conduct secret.

Including Yamada Manufacturing, 35 companies and 29 executives have pleaded guilty or agreed to plead guilty in the division’s ongoing investigation into price fixing and bid rigging in the auto parts industry and have agreed to pay a total of more than \$2.5 billion in criminal fines.

Yamada Manufacturing is charged with one count of price fixing and bid rigging in violation of the Sherman Act, which carries maximum penalties of a \$100 million criminal fine for corporations. The maximum fine may be increased to twice the gain derived from the crime

or twice the loss suffered by the victims of the crime, if either of those amounts is greater than the statutory maximum fine.

The charges are the result of an ongoing federal antitrust investigation into price fixing, bid rigging and other anticompetitive conduct in the automotive parts industry, which is being conducted by the Antitrust Division's criminal enforcement sections and the FBI. Today's charges were brought by the Antitrust Division's Chicago Office and the FBI's Cincinnati Field Office with assistance from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Ohio. Anyone with information on price fixing, bid rigging and other anticompetitive conduct related to other products in the automotive parts industry should contact the Antitrust Division's Citizen Complaint Center at 1-888-647-3258, visit www.justice.gov/atr/contact/newcase.html, or call the FBI's Cincinnati Field Office at 513-421-4310.

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