



Office of Defects Investigation

2005 JUN 22 AM 5:16

VOQ Confirmation

Your Complaint Information is successfully submitted.

Your Confirmation number (ODI Number) is: 10127231

*Add to 10127231*

Your Complaint Information

Consumer Information

Name : [REDACTED]  
 Org. Name : [REDACTED]  
 Address : [REDACTED]  
 City, State, Zip : Port Kent, NY [REDACTED]  
 USA  
 Daytime Phone : [REDACTED] Fax :  
 Evening Phone : [REDACTED] Fax :  
 Email : [REDACTED]

Complaint Information

Description : ABS braking fault - extreme pull to left into oncoming traffic. See enclosed information sent by mail.  
 Incident Date : 4/23/2005 Fire : No  
 Num. Followers : 1 Property Damage : No  
 Num. Deaths : 0 Crash : No  
 Num. Injured : 0 Police Report : No  
 Referral Source : HOME PAGE INT

Vehicle Information

VIN : 1J4EJ78L5L1 [REDACTED] Purchase Date : 4/18/2005  
 Manufacturer : DAIMLERCHRYSLER CORPORATION  
 Year, Make and Model : 1990/JEEP/CHEROKEE Original Owner : No  
 # of Cylinders : 6 Trans. Type : AUTOMATIC  
 Engine Size : 4.0 l Vehicle Details Usage : LIGHT TRUCK  
 Cruise Control : Yes Antilock Brakes : Yes

*NAR 2005 7/29/05*

<b>Current Mileage :</b>	142000	<b>Speed :</b>	40
<b>Failure Mileage :</b>	142000	<b>Powertrain :</b>	4 WHEEL DRIVE
<b>Body Style :</b>	SUV	<b>Fuel System :</b>	FUEL INJECTION
<b>Fuel Type :</b>	GAS	<b>Vehicle Type :</b>	

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**Vehicle Component Information**

<b>Component 1:</b>	SERVICE BRAKES, HYDRAULIC:ANTILOCK	<b>ODIS:</b>	Yes
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**Vehicle Dealer Information**
**IS Dealer :** 1

**Name :** Durocher Jeep

**Dealer Type :** SERVICE DEALER

**Address :** 92 Elizabeth St.

 Pittsburgh  
 NY 12901

**Dealer Phone:** 800-838-9338

**Dealer Fax:**
**Email:** durocherac@aol.com

**IS Dealer :** 2

**Name :** Autowholesalers of Natick Ma

**Dealer Type :** SALES DEALER

**Address :** 135 W. Central St.



 Natick  
 MA 01760

**Dealer Phone:** 774-279-0310

**Dealer Fax:**
**Email:**



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[top](#)



July 1, 2005

Daimler-Chrysler Customer Assistance Center  
PO Box 21-8004  
Auburn Hills, MI 48321-8004

RE: Recall Center File# 13552749 (Spoke to Vicki)  
VIN# 1J4FJ78L6L1 


Customer Support,

In April 2005, I purchased a 1990 Jeep Cherokee Limited on eBay with approx. 140,000 miles on the odometer. At the time the vehicle had two remaining outstanding recalls - one for the ABS system and another for the brake/shift interlock. Upon initially driving the vehicle, it became evident that the ABS light was on and there was a dramatic pull to the left when the brakes were applied as the ABS was engaging only the left side. The ABS was definitely engaging because the pedal would pulsate and rapid clicking noises came from the modulator. I inspected the brakes at all four wheels and determined that all components were free and seemed to be fully operational and evenly worn.

I suspected that since there was an ABS recall on the car and I seemed to be having an ABS-related failure, that it was indeed an ABS issue. To test this, I disconnected the 2 ABS fuses under the dash. I found that although the braking was much more difficult without the power-assist from the ABS system, there was no discernable pulling to the left - the vehicle came to a straight stop on numerous tries. Upon plugging the ABS fuses back in, the hard pull to the left returned, as well as the modulator clicking noises.

After doing some newsgroup searches on the Internet, I came to the conclusion that the ABS system installed on this vehicle tended to be prone to failures, and my AllData lookup found that the entire ABS system warranty had been increased to 100,000 miles on the entire system with a lifetime extension on the pump and actuator assemblies. However, newsgroup members who had had similar issues with their vehicles recommended that I scrap the ABS system altogether and replace it with a conventional power braking system. This was because even after the recall and warranty repairs, their ABS systems were still troublesome and dangerous - prone to unexpected failures under hard braking.

Since I was definitely in the midst of a recall/warranty issue, rather than repair the brakes myself, I decided I should bring it to Durocher Jeep in Plattsburgh, NY to address the ABS recall and to perform other repairs needed for NYS inspection. Lisa Gonyo at Durocher Jeep was to be my contact for the next 6 weeks that my car was in the shop. I have included all hard correspondence that I have for the job, but there were also several phone conversations between us. I will try to give a brief history below:



1. Initial phone conversation after the tech had driven the car and tried to diagnose the ABS system; The trouble fault was traced to the ECU, and the ABS recall could not continue until the ECU was replaced, which was ~\$1100 for the part alone and was not part of the recall, nor the warranty because it was over 100,000 miles. I was also informed that there could be more non-covered components that may need to be replaced before the recall could be performed. *I inquired if the ABS system could simply be bypassed by removing fuses/relays and the tech stated that it could not* - it would need to be repaired or converted to a traditional non-ABS system for ~\$1300 parts/labor using used/rebuilt parts. I asked Lisa Gonyo if she could contact either a national or regional rep for more guidance on the issue and she neither said she would or wouldn't.

2. I contacted D-C Recall Center and Vicki started my case. After explaining the situation, I asked if D-C could either cover the cost of the entire repair, or pay for the switchover to a non-ABS system, since the original system was established as inherently troublesome and unsafe. She stated that D-C would only pay for parts/labor stated in the recall, namely the actuator and pump assemblies, and could offer no other suggestions.

3. At this point the car has been in the shop two weeks. Faced with a Catch-22, I felt it would be better to stay with the original system with it's faults rather than switching to a non-ABS system that would be composed primarily of used/rebuilt parts. I contacted Durocher and Lisa had not come up with any more options. Again, it was stated that *the ABS system could not be bypassed or loss of power braking would result*. Therefore, I reluctantly agreed to proceed with replacing the ECU in hopes that that would be the entire problem.

4. On June 7, 5 weeks into the repair, I received a note from Durocher stating that the ECU had been replaced, but that the accumulator (\$300 p/l) had to be replaced because there was an internal leak. At this point, the recall found the actuator assembly was faulty and was replaced under the lifetime warranty. The ABS light was now off, but the vehicle still pulled hard to the left just as before the repair. Because of contaminated brake fluid (the subject of a different ABS recall), Durocher suggested I replace my front calipers & hoses. At this point I felt they were clutching at straws, since I told them that I had inspected the calipers and found everything to be in order. I suggested that maybe the wheel sensors were faulty or out of calibration, but this was dismissed because it would have shown a fault. I asked if they could GUARANTEE me that the additional \$500 charge for the caliper/hose replacement would fix the problem, but they could not.

Because of another problem I was having regarding a Neutral Safety switch issue involving my backup light switch being out of adjustment (Durocher said it could not be fixed and must be replaced for \$400 p&l, I disagreed, feeling certain it only needed to be adjusted), I requested that they button up the car and I would pay for all repairs to date. On June 13, I picked up the vehicle (nearly 6 weeks after dropping it off) and drove it home having failed NYS inspection because of the backup light issue. The car was still unsafe to drive, but not because of the backup lights, but because it pulled as severely as it had done when I brought it in - 6 weeks and \$1500 ago. The

total charges were over \$3100, but half of that was for other smaller repairs that I had asked them to do as well.

That night, I did some reading through the ABS section of my AllData service, and determined that the brake issue was either due to wheel sensors or the ABS modulator not operating correctly. The literature also mentioned an "ABS Fail-safe mode", stating that the system would revert to a POWERED, non-ABS state if there was a failure, which contradicted what I was told by Durocher, who said it could not be bypassed.

The next day I spent 30 seconds adjusting the NSS and my backup lights worked perfectly (saving \$400!). Next, I removed the modulator relay and the odd noise from my brake pedal went away. I decided to drive the car, and to my surprise, *the brakes functioned perfectly with no pulling*, although the ABS was now non-functional and the "Check ABS" light was on as expected. I replaced the relay and the symptoms returned as before. So, in less than 30 min, I had solved and fixed two problems that Durocher couldn't figure out in 6 weeks with every available resource - and likely saving myself at least another \$1000!!

The reason for this complaint is that I feel that my case was completely mishandled by D-C and Durocher Jeep, and I feel I am entitled to restitution for the following reasons:

1. I feel that a competent technician should have been able to diagnose in 6 weeks what took me only 30 minutes to figure out, and not have suggested an additional \$500 repair that was totally unjustified.
2. I feel that if Durocher had contacted a regional or national service representative, they would have known that the ABS was able to be put into "Fail-safe Mode", which I gladly would have done to avoid either a \$1300 ABS partial repair, or a \$1300 changeover to non-ABS brakes.
3. I feel that D-C, knowing that the ABS system in these vehicles is very troublesome and prone to sudden, dangerous failures, should either have a lifetime warranty on all ABS related parts and repairs, or should offer the owners of these vehicles a free changeover to a non-ABS system, or at least bypass it, as I am currently doing.

Because of the safety issues involved, I have forward a full copy of this complaint to the NHTSA for their review as well. Thank you for your time and consideration on this issue, and I anticipate a prompt response.

Sincerely,

  
~~Cc NHTSA~~

THE ATTACHMENTS TO THIS  
DOCUMENT HAVE BEEN REMOVED  
TO PROTECT UNWARRANTED  
INVASION OF PERSONAL PRIVACY  
PURSUANT TO EXEMPTION 6 OF  
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION  
ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(6).