



U.S. Department
of Transportation

National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

April 6, 2011

[REDACTED]
Sterling Heights, MI [REDACTED]

NVS-216 mec
Ref. No. 10274625

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your correspondence, cosigned by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] concerning your late mother's model year (MY) 1997 Chrysler Town and Country minivan. On behalf of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), please accept our sincere condolences for the loss of your mother, [REDACTED].

NHTSA is the Federal agency responsible for improving safety on our Nation's highways. We are authorized to order manufacturers to recall and repair vehicles or motor vehicle equipment when our investigations indicate that they contain safety defects in their design, construction, or performance. In order for the agency to initiate an investigation, we look carefully at the body of consumer complaints and other available data to determine whether a defect may exist.

We appreciate the report you provided. In your correspondence, you indicated that your mother placed her MY 1997 Chrysler Town and Country minivan into the park position and got out of the vehicle with the engine running. You stated that once she was out of the vehicle, it self-shifted into reverse and knocked her to the ground, pinning her underneath the left front tire. You request NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation physically inspect your mother's vehicle. In addition, you feel this is a widespread problem in Chrysler minivans and request that NHTSA open an investigation.

We reviewed our database in an effort to identify whether a safety defect trend exists with regard to MY 1997 Chrysler Town and Country minivan transmissions inadvertently shifting out of park and into reverse gear. In addition, ODI has been in contact with you and your family to discuss the details of the fatal accident involving your mother. Our agency has investigated and recalled certain Chrysler vehicles for inadvertent park-to-reverse problems; however, those vehicles have transmissions that use a completely different gear position mechanism than those used in Chrysler minivans. At this time, there is insufficient evidence to warrant opening a safety defect investigation.

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ES10-007581

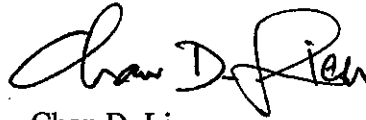
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The agency will continue to monitor your concerns regarding Chrysler minivans. We have respectfully requested certain information from you and your family. We would like to review and add to our files the police accident report, the vehicle service history, and the report from your technical expert on the tragic incident.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions, please contact me or Mr. Claude H. Harris, Acting Associate Administrator for Enforcement, at (202) 366-3217.

Sincerely yours,



Chan D. Lieu
Director, Governmental Affairs,
Policy and Strategic Planning

cc: [REDACTED]