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INFORMATION ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(B)(6)

Monroe, WA

September 7, 2016

Randy Reid
NHTSA
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590

SEP 15 2016

Dear Randy:

In follow up to investigation 10853979 where I on May 11th 2016 mailed a letter and copies of e-mail communication with Kathy Ross at Carefree of Colorado. Looking online there are many incidents with motorized and manual awnings on Motorhomes and Camping trailers that are unfurling when driving.

Talking to a few people that are in the industry like our RV Repair man at Mentone Beach RV storage where we kept our RV, did show me a motor where the hub from a Carefree of Colorado awning that deployed just like ours and caused a lot of damage to the side of the RV. The service manager and one of the service writers at our local Monroe, WA Chevrolet dealership and they both have experienced Awnings that deployed while driving just like ours.

Dometic RV Awnings did recall 27,000 awnings after they discovered their electric awnings where unfurling.

Carefree of Colorado have known of the problem shortly after they started using the motor shaft and coupling design with only one side of the shaft having a flat surface to match the flat surface inside the hub. The problem with their awnings not rolling back up because of the motor shaft just spinning inside the hub quickly did lead to a redesign in late 2008 where they added a flat surface in the other side of the shaft and the hub to prevent the hub from spinning.

Carefree of Colorado offered the Holiday Rambler owners to purchase the new updated motor and coupling for \$ 100.00 and when I brought this up in one of my first phone conversations I was offered to purchase the motor and coupling at a reduced price too. I explained that it won't do any good now because the awning is completely gone. Kathy Ross at Carefree told me that they don't think a recall or notifying owners is called for because they don't know of any accidents. (In reality what happens is that the insurance companies are paying the repairs and Carefree is profiting by the poor faulty design).

Here are pictures that show the motor shaft design from 2006 to 2008 that drives the awning roller. The second picture show the coupler installed on the motor shaft that is just free spinning because the flat surface inside the coupler is not tight to the shaft.

RR
9/16/16
SMD



I did visit Carefree of Colorado and spoke with Kathy Ross June 22nd 2016 to see the new design that is meant to prevent the coupler from spinning on the motor shaft. See the picture below. It has flats on each side of the motor shaft.



The following pages are from searching the internet for Carefree unfurling awnings. Two pages are Attorneys blogging. The third page is Carefree's offer Holiday Ramblers to replace the motor for \$ 100.00. Rest of the pages are RV owners with unfurling awnings.



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RV Awning Danger

Discussion in [in the News](#) started by News, Oct 15, 2007.

Page 1 of 2 [1](#) [2](#) [Next >](#)



News
NewsHound

Joined: Sep 12, 2007
Messages: 48
Likes Received: 0

The following is from an article by [in the News](#) What's your experience? - have you ever had a problem with an awning?

"The public should be aware of the dangers involving awnings attached to the side of recreational vehicles (RVs) and horse trailers.

The hazard is that awnings which have been rolled up and fastened to the side of the vehicle may become dislodged and hang out towards oncoming traffic.

This hazard is so common that one RV manufacturer stated on its website: "There are two types of RVers --- those that have had their awnings blown off and those that will!"

A defective awning lock resulted in the death of [in the News](#), a Uniontown, Alabama city councilman who was returning to his home from a school board meeting. As [in the News](#) minivan approached an oncoming extended horse trailer being pulled by a 2001 Ford F350 truck, the awning on the horse trailer had broken loose from the trailer and was hanging down towards oncoming traffic. When the two vehicles met, the awning assembly from the trailer struck [in the News](#) windshield, killing him instantly.

This accident was preventable.

[in the News](#) family hired the law firm headed by former Lt. Governor Jere Beasley to sue the manufacturer which caused [in the News](#) death. Mike Andrews, who handled the case for the Beasley firm, discovered that the retractable arms of the awning were equipped with metal folding locks that were defectively designed and manufactured. The

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09 04 2016 Headline: Will the Medical/Hospital Community Address the 250,000 Deaths by Medical Errors? 4 months ago

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Billy Cunningham

Attorney • (800) 574-4332

RV Awnings Can Become Missiles

Posted by Billy Cunningham

January 12, 2013 10:26 AM

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Recreational vehicles (RVs) are becoming popular again perhaps because of baby boomers retiring. It is a good idea before hitting the highways this spring to give your RV a thorough maintenance inspection and make any necessary repairs. One of the cautions almost every RV manufacturer, insurance company and consumer groups recommend is to make sure your awning is stowed and locked.

If that awning comes loose from your RV, it can become a dangerous projectile to others on or near the highway. In 2004, [REDACTED] was driving home in Alabama when an awning broke loose from a horse trailer, struck his approaching vehicle and killed him. In 2010, Burns, Cunningham and Mackey's client, [REDACTED] was returning from a writers' conference in Pensacola when an awning billowed and separated from an RV. The fabric roller tube assembly flew into her lane of traffic and went through her windshield. It struck her in the face, severely fractured her jaw, knocked out most of her teeth and fractured her vertebra. She has survived and has undergone multiple complex surgical and medical treatments. She is still undergoing treatment.

Awnings should be designed to withstand wind gusts expected to occur on the highway. Before any trip, a walk around to check the vehicle checking the component parts is always necessary. A detailed re-inspection should be done periodically and before any extensive trip. Some of the safety features to prevent separation are not seen by the naked eye. Because not all potential problems are obvious, an inspection of the component parts by a qualified mechanic should be periodically performed.

Have fun on your trips and do whatever you can to prevent having another person seriously injured or killed by an awning flying off on the highway.

Tags: awnings, RV

1 Comment

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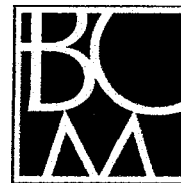
January 13, 2013 at 7:54 am

Awnings? Do you realize that loose and defective utility trailers destroy more lives than awnings? Why has the legal community given a free pass to people who make homemade trailers? Why has the legal community allow people use Duct tape to secure a trailer and destroy a life and only get 3 months? Go to [REDACTED] and wake up

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Carefree Eclipse Awnings

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Details

Created: Saturday, 07 August 2010 23:31
 Last Updated: Sunday, 23 June 2013 09:14
 Written by [REDACTED]

These are the large motorized patio awnings on most coaches. The units affected currently seem to have the shaft/end cap design with one flat.

Issue: The end cap has rounded out where the motor drive shaft is connected causing the awning to deploy and not be able to retract.

Coaches affected seem to be from 2006-late 2008 when the current design was initiated.

- The older coaches have a spider and don't seem to be a problem from the posts on our forum
- the next group is round with a single flat that has experienced some failures primarily in high cross wind conditions
- the current version is round with two flats.

Here is the process for addressing your concerns about the Eclipse awnings.

As we discussed if any member of your E-group coach owners has concerns about their Carefree Eclipse awning, we would encourage them to take it into a Carefree of Colorado Authorized Service facility to have it inspected. If the dealer determines the motor/shaft/end cap assembly should be replaced for any reason, it will be covered under Carefree's standard warranty. All coaches purchased prior to January of 2009 come with a 4-year Carefree Warranty to the original owner. We have a complete listing of Carefree Authorized Service facilities posted on our website [REDACTED]

The inspection process should be free; if you find there is an issue with that, contact
 Traci Deyoung,
 Carefree of Colorado
 1-800-621-2617 Extension 6319
 [REDACTED]

If there is an issue with your motor/end cap and it is under warranty, the service center will replace it for free.

If there is no issue or the unit is not under warranty, and you still want to replace the motor/end cap, Carefree has arranged for you to purchase the parts from a specific dealer at greatly reduced cost (\$100 vs & \$185 normal retail). They will ship directly to you and you can arrange for installation.

The dealer we will work through is:
 RV's R Us
 303-232-2714

Multiple Companies \$1,150.00
 Ken \$130.00

If you have specific questions or concerns, Traci will be your best contact or you can email me and I will try to help.

Traci is not always in the office, but will definitely follow up with any calls. If she is unavailable, her backup at Carefree is
 Kathy Ross
 1-800-621-2617 Extension 6408
kross@carefreeofcolorado.com

March 28, 2016



Join Date: Sep 2005
Location: HOME: Oshkosh, WI
Posts: 2,018

used my torch and heated the rod and bent a small hook in one end ... and a loop in the other end.

I attached half of the screen door spring to the loop end of the rod.

This allows me to tie down my awning while standing on the ground ... the hook goes into the loop on the awning end ... the spring fastens into the bottom of the awning arm ... I have two of these ... one for the front of the awning and one for the back.

I have been using this tie down for about 5 years ... no unfurls ... and I have travelled across Wyoming, flats of Colorado and New Mexico, and I-8 in CA several times where I have experienced some very strong gusts ...

These locks work

2004 Winnebago Journey 39W - 2012 Buick Enclave

Present @home Home: Oshkosh, WI

We call our rig "



Quote

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Golfer Dies After Being Struck by Lightning

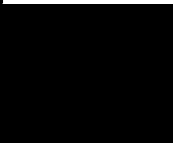
Avoid a Mess: Empty Your Waste Tanks Cleanly and E...

Easy way to plan a long RV Trip

Great Escapes in the Port Townsend Region

10-28-2011, 08:06 PM

#6



Monaco Owners Club
Winnebago Owners Club
Join Date: Sep 2011
Posts: 6,042

Mine billowed out while driving across I 90 at 60 mph. Winds were gusting at 50 mph. The fifth wheel in front of us almost went over seconds later my main awning was blowing in the breeze. CareFree electric awning. In for repairs now.

Alaska EMT.
2009 Safari Cheetah 40 SKQ
2009 Winnebago Chalet 231CR



Quote

10-29-2011, 09:51 PM

#7

Senior Member

Join Date: May 2009
Location: Bluff Dale, TX
Posts: 565

Use the awning rod in the roller. Use a rubber EPDM elastic strap, hooks on both ends.
Hold the rod behind the awning arm and hook the tarp strap. Bring the tarp strap around the front edge of the awning arm, then stretch it down and hook to the back hole at the bottom of the arm.
The rod will not shake out and the awning will not unfurl I use the 21 inch elastic strap.

Most RV batteries live a long and useful life, some are murdered.
2000 National Sea Breeze F53
1998 CRV Toad



Quote

10-29-2011, 01:50 AM

#8



I always block mine on the post when we travel much safer

from Québec Ca NKK#
2004 Kountry Star 3904 Cummins 330 ISC towing a Jeep Cherokee Trail Hawk 2016, Blue Ox, and Buddy Brake ,TMS,

ReadyBrute Elite tow bar/Blue Ox baseplate



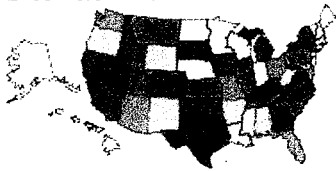
Allstate Claims division

800 255 7828 # [REDACTED]

Posted By: [REDACTED] on 01/16/10 07:25am

Installed a "Awning Clamp" on our awning last year just before our 6,000+ miles trip thru some nasty winds on the way to Seattle, WA (I-90) without any problem.

1998 Holiday Rambler Vacationer
2005 Ford Focus TOAD



Posted By: [REDACTED] on 01/16/10 08:13am

Same thing happened to me while traveling through KY on Christmas Day. Wow! what an attention getter! The only thing damaged was the hole striped out of the awning tube end cap on the motor shaft. I consider myself lucky the whole thing wasn't torn off the side of the MH. Of course you can't just by the end cap, Carefree only supplies it as part of the motor assembly which is over \$200.00. A little JB Weld and some machining with a file did the trick well enough to make it home. Stopped at Camping World in Nashville on the way back home and bought the awning lock. Hasn't been warm enough here to install it yet but it looks well built and I think it will do the job.

My awning is the Carefree Eclipse. I like it okay, but would have liked the model that includes the spring assist. The motor seems to struggle a bit when rolling it up.

2012 Winnebago Tour 42 QD
ISL 450

Posted By: [REDACTED] on 01/16/10 08:22am

if you want an awning that is enclosed i suggest girard motorized. expensive but well worth it

Posted By: [REDACTED] on 01/16/10 08:36am

I have never experienced an awning failure, and I am wondering how it happens. I have a manual A&E awning. There are plastic locks that hold the arms together to prevent them folding out, and the awning spring has two settings, one for retracting and one for deploying. When traveling, the lock is in retract. I also have a metal cover over the awning material. So for the awning to deploy, the wind would have to break the spring lock on the awning and the plastic locks on the arms. Is this what happens?

2004 Rexhall Rose Air
2006 Jeep Grand Cherokee toad

March 28, 2016

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Topic: lost Awning in Wind

Posted By: [REDACTED] on 01/15/10 01:18pm

While on the hwy traveling wind took my awning that I had just replaced the material. Some of the parts broke so I will now replace the whole thing with self contained motorized one.

What are your suggestions of brands and types?

Posted By: [REDACTED] on 01/15/10 01:28pm

So sorry for what was probably a big scare as well as significant property damage. It happened to us a year ago with our Carefree of Colorado power awning on I-20 in Texas. We shouldn't have been on the road that day, but had a schedule. (The enemy of passage-makers...)

Insurance covered part of the repair, but we were able to save the frame and the motorized parts. Now, as a matter of course, we tie down the awning from the top of the coach whenever we travel. It's not worth the worry. It made as much noise as a blow-out when it went. (Like a cannon shot...)

Still like the Carefree of Colorado unit but don't trust it in a wind.

Good luck, [REDACTED]

Posted By: [REDACTED] on 01/15/10 01:37pm

It's happened to us.

The solution [REDACTED]

Posted By: [REDACTED] on 01/15/10 02:11pm

Lost my awning at Beverly Beach in FL. Come sudden one afternoon. I had a TT at the time. I was in the shower and wife was cooking. She yell its getting dark, and I grab a towel and went out one door wife went out other door. Awning snapped clean off hit the wife in the face and chest, she was in the hospital for two days. Insurance covered evrything but the deduck.

Posted By: [REDACTED] on 01/15/10 02:47pm

I just posted this same subject a few days ago under "general discussions". Do a search wind & awnings. A friend and his buddy traveling together each lost thier awning at the same time. I don't realy believe automatic electric awnings are imune to unerfering in the wind. [REDACTED]

Life is like a roll of toilet paper
the closer you get to the end the faster it goes.
Enjoy it what's left.

March 28, 2016



Carefree Colorado Eclipse Awning

Started by [REDACTED] Jul 30 2011 10:11 AM

Posted 30 July 2011 - 10:11 AM

I am looking for used parts such as an awning end cap for a Carefree Colorado Eclipse. The end cap is the part between the motor and the roller. It transmits the movement from the motor to the roller. My problem is that the hole in which the motor shaft enters is not perfectly round. The shaft turns loose in the hole.

I contacted Carefree. I have to buy the entire motor assembly when I just need the end cap.

Any idea where I could find such a part.

Thanks

Posted 30 July 2011 - 10:20 AM

[REDACTED] on 30 Jul 2011 - 08:11 AM, said:

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Thanks

Welcome to the Forum.

Google [REDACTED] There are salvage yards all over the USA and there may be one in your area. You may have to buy the complete roller assy. to get the end cap. One place may have a roller that is damaged and the end cap is good. Look on line, phone them up and check them out.
Good Luck. ☺

Posted 30 July 2011 - 04:50 PM

You can also use the search tool in the menu line at the top of this page. Enter [REDACTED] and change the area to search to [REDACTED] There have been a number of discussions and there are plenty of sources listed. I recently posted an answer to a query about [REDACTED] and put several of the references on that post. That discussion should come up at the top of your list when you do a search.

Posted 30 July 2011 - 09:49 PM

Had same issue while on the road. Not wanting to buy whole motor, I ended up filing the end cap to create a flat groove that aligned with the flat part of the shaft. Then I inserted a flat aluminum wedge cut from a piece of alum bar

purchased at Lowes for \$3. Total cost of fix was less than \$30 including the files and hack saw. Much less than the cost of new motor.

Posted 10 August 2012 - 04:25 PM

I know this topic is a year old now but I had the same problem-- on 3 motors! It took the third one to finally get me to look at what failed, when it happened on the road and the awning started to open on its own. After our trip I brought the motor home(was replaced at a shop) and I had one of the original ones in the garage. After investigating, I realized there was nothing wrong with the motor or any of the gearing, just the problem you described-- the final output shaft is slipping in the drive hub. The shaft has a flat spot machined into it but the hub fits loose on it, allowing it to turn sometimes, because the hub is made of some kind of soft metal that yields, and presto! the awning will start to open when driving.

Not a comfortable experience, side of the road, trying to wrap it back up and duct tape the thing together until it could be fixed. Working on a ladder, on the side of the freeway.

I emailed Carefree just today to see if later versions(like the one I currently have installed) are any different. They said they made a design change in July 2008 that added a second flat spot on the shaft. My second motor replacement was in 2010 so I guess Holland Motors used an obsolete part for the replacement. I didn't verify the design of the one installed last month.

I did a simple repair on my "spares" as [REDACTED] describes. It took about 15 minutes to file a slightly bigger slot in the hub to allow fitting a piece of metal. I used a jigsaw blade for the right width and I liked the hardness.

[Back to General discussion](#)

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Unknown Carefree Awning Unknown Or Other Recall 96E003000

Action Number: N/A

Service Bulletin Number: 96E003000

Report Date: Feb 26, 1996

Component: Unknown Or Other

Potential Units Affected: 2808

Manufacturer: Carefree Of Colorado

Summary: The awning for the slide-out room of recreational vehicles can unfurl or unroll during transit causing the bracket to rip free of the sidewall of the vehicle.

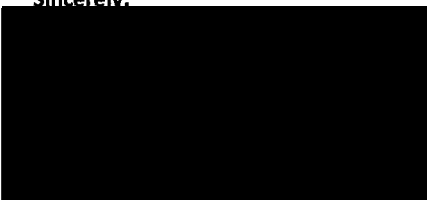
Consequence: The awning could break loose while the vehicle is in motion resulting in a vehicle accident and personal injury.

Remedy: Dealers will install arm locks, anti-billow studs and brackets as well as wind deflectors on these awnings.

Notes: System: equipment; other pieces. Equipment description: awning used on slide-out rooms on recreational vehicles. See also campaign no. 96v036, winnebago. Note: owners who take their vehicles to an authorized dealer on an agreed upon service date and do not receive the free remedy within a reasonable time, should contact carefree at 1-800-621-2617. Also contact the national highway traffic safety administration's auto safety hotline at 1-800-424-9393.

I would like for Carefree to follow the path Dometic did, like a recall or at least let owners know to inspect the roller driver coupling before any other major accidents happen.

Sincerely,

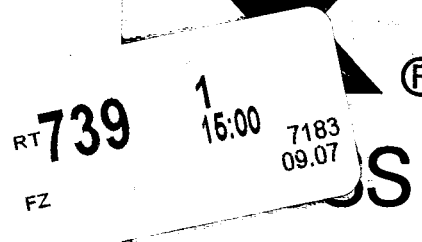


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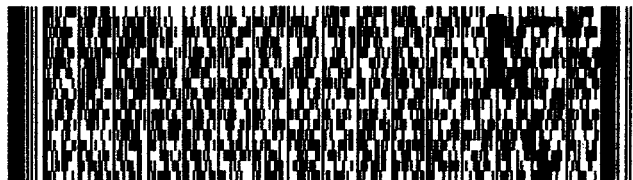
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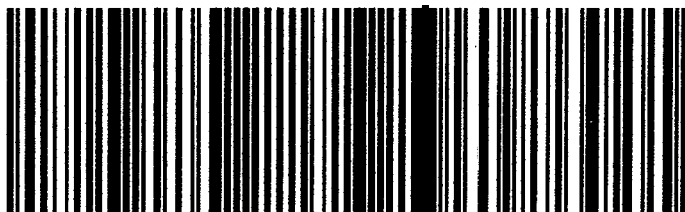
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