

NHT-010

CL-10910353-4887

Efland, NC

September 13, 2016

INFORMATION Redacted PURSUANT TO THE FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(B)(6)

National Hwy. Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20590

Re: 2003 Jeep Liberty Sport
VIN: 1J4GL48K53W
Dear Sir/Madam,

SEP 20 2016

This letter serves to advise you that on September 3, 2016 the front lower left ball joint on my Jeep Liberty failed, causing the vehicle to lose control, pull to the left across the center line of traffic and into the oncoming lane of travel. The cause of the failure was the fact that the ball had corroded into the knuckle of the joint, immobilizing it from turning within the knuckle, and causing the ball to break off at its weakest point, where it is welded to the bolt. I have retained the part in question for your inspection and independent confirmation of this fact.

At the time of the failure, the vehicle was traveling at approximately 40 mph in a 35 mph zone on a paved road in Roxboro, NC. There was no accident or impact with a pothole or curb which preceded this event. When the ball joint failed, the rest of the steering armature collapsed into the inside of the wheel rim, ripping through the aluminum alloy rim, and thereby causing the vehicle to pull hard to the left and into the oncoming lane of travel. By the grace of God, the oncoming vehicles swerved and were able to avoid a head on collision with the Jeep. As the vehicle was blocking traffic in both directions and could not be driven, it was immediately towed from the scene by order of the Roxboro Police Department.

I contacted Daimler Chrysler regarding this issue and was advised that there had been two prior ball joint recalls on this model Jeep, one for the upper and one for the lower ball joints. However, they decided that the recall for the lower ball joint was inapplicable to my case as it reads as follows:

"The problem is...Water may enter into the front suspension lower ball joints on your Jeep (VIN XXXXXXXXX). This can cause the ball joint to corrode and separate. Ball joint separation can result in a loss of steering control and could cause a crash without prior warning."

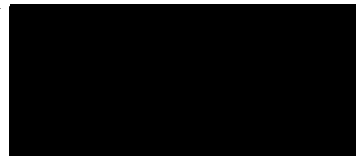
Because of the fact that the ball had not in fact separated from the knuckle, but instead, had broken off INSIDE the knuckle in which it had been locked up by corrosion, their prior recall did not apply. Regardless of the precise mechanics of the part failure, the result was the same, the vehicle, without warning lost control, the front left tire totally locked up by the fallen armature which tore into the wheel rim, pulled the vehicle into the oncoming lane of travel and could have led to a catastrophic accident.

Based on the potential for catastrophic loss as a result of this faulty part, I ask that the NHTSA issue a separate recall which INCLUDES the situation where, as here, the ball locked into the knuckle as a result of corrosion. We live in a rural area where two lane roads with 55 mph speed limits are the norm. Had this failure occurred on one of our rural thoroughfares, the end of this story would have been much sadder I am sure.

NM
92616
SMD

Please contact me should you need any further information regarding this matter. I have enclosed photos of both the failed ball joint as well as the wheel rim for your review. I look forward to your earliest reply.

Very truly yours,



Encl: photos

DAIMLERCHRYSLER

SAFETY RECALL F23 – LOWER BALL JOINTS

Dear: (Name)

This notice is sent to you in accordance with the requirements of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act.

DaimlerChrysler Corporation has decided that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety, exists in some **2002 through 2006 model year Jeep® Liberty vehicles.**

NOTE: 2002 and 2003 model year vehicles involved in a previous ball joint recall must also have this recall performed.

The problem is... Water may enter into the front suspension lower ball joints on your Jeep (VIN: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx). This can cause the ball joint to corrode and separate. Ball joint separation can result in a loss of steering control and could cause a crash without prior warning.

What your dealer will do... DaimlerChrysler will repair your vehicle free of charge (parts and labor). To do this, your dealer will replace both front lower ball joints. The work will take about 1 hour to complete. However, additional time may be necessary depending on how dealer appointments are scheduled and processed.

What you must do to ensure your safety... Simply **contact your dealer** right away to schedule a service appointment. Ask the dealer to hold the parts for your vehicle or to order them before your appointment. **Remember to bring this letter with you to your dealer.**

If you need help... If you have questions or concerns which your dealer is unable to resolve, please contact DaimlerChrysler at 1-800-853-1403.

Please help us update our records, by filling out the attached prepaid postcard, if any of the conditions listed on the card apply to you or your vehicle.

If you have already experienced this condition and have paid to have it repaired, you may send your original receipts and/or other adequate proof of payment to the following address for reimbursement: DaimlerChrysler P.O. Box 4639 Oak Ridge, TN 37831, Attention: Reimbursement.

If your dealer fails or is unable to remedy this defect without charge and within a reasonable time, you may submit a written complaint to the Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590, or call the toll-free Vehicle Safety Hotline at 1-888-327-4236 (TTY 1-800-424-9153), or go to <http://www.safercar.gov>.

We're sorry for any inconvenience, but we are sincerely concerned about your safety. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Customer Services Field Operations
DaimlerChrysler Corporation
Notification Code F23

*Buckle up
for Safety!*

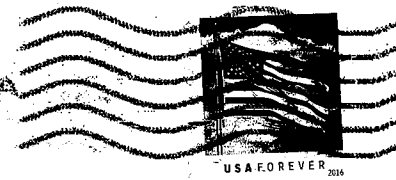
Note to lessors receiving this recall: Federal regulation requires that you forward this recall notice to the lessee within 10 days.





[REDACTED]
EFLAND, NC

GREENSBORO NC 274
PIEDMONT TRIAD AREA
13 SEP 2016 PM 5 L



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400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20590

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