

Office of Defects Investigation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Safety Defect Complaint — Ram ProMaster (2018–2025) — Cowl Water Intrusion into Engine Compartment

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to formally report what I believe to be a serious, systemic, and unresolved design defect in the Ram ProMaster van, affecting model years 2018 through at least 2025. I am requesting that the Office of Defects Investigation open or expand a formal investigation into this matter.

Vehicle Information:

Year/Make/Model: 2025 Ram ProMaster

VIN: [REDACTED]

Purchase Date: [REDACTED]

Current Mileage: 700

Nature of the Defect:

The windshield cowl on the Ram ProMaster is designed in a manner that permits significant water intrusion directly into the engine compartment. Water enters through the cowl seam and surrounding gaps, bypassing any drainage system, and flows onto critical engine and electrical components including but not limited to: the serpentine belt and pulley system, the engine fuse box, transmission components, and wiring harnesses.

I brought my vehicle to two separate authorized Ram dealerships. The second dealer confirmed — based on testing conducted on multiple ProMaster vans dating back to 2018 — that this water intrusion behavior is consistent across the model line. In other words, the dealer has effectively confirmed that this is not a defect isolated to my vehicle, but a design characteristic of the ProMaster platform itself. This confirmation does not reassure me. It alarms me.

Documented Safety Hazards:

This defect creates multiple, serious, and foreseeable safety risks:

1. Loss of Power Steering: Water infiltrating the serpentine belt and pulley system can cause belt slippage, resulting in sudden and unexpected loss of power steering assistance. NHTSA is already investigating 136,000 ProMaster vans (MY 2022–2023) for power steering failures in which water intrusion into the electric power steering control module is cited as a likely cause. The root mechanism — water reaching drivetrain and electrical components via the cowl — is the same.
2. Electrical Failure and Fire Risk: Water reaching the engine fuse box causes electrical shorts. Documented cases include wiper motor wiring burning out and surrounding wires melting, which constitutes a fire hazard and a sudden loss of visibility while driving.
3. Frozen Water on Mechanical Components: In cold-weather climates, water that pools on or near the serpentine belt can freeze, causing belt failure or seizure. This risk is particularly acute in northern states and during winter months.

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4. Engine and Manifold Damage: My vehicle is already showing discoloration of the intake manifold — physical evidence of water exposure on the engine — despite the vehicle being relatively new. Sustained water intrusion degrades engine components, catalytic converters, and sensors, creating long-term reliability and safety risks.

5. Transmission Damage: Water can enter the transmission breather hole, contaminating transmission fluid and causing erratic shifting, delayed engagement, or complete transmission failure — all of which present serious crash risks at highway speeds.

History and Scope of the Problem:

Public owner forums, complaint databases, and owner questionnaires submitted to NHTSA document this exact issue dating back to at least 2014. Multiple authorized dealerships have acknowledged the issue and confirmed its consistency across the model range. Stellantis / Ram has not issued a recall, a technical service bulletin remedying the root cause, or a redesigned component to address this flaw. Advising customers that this behavior is "normal" does not absolve the manufacturer of its safety obligations — it deepens them.

Conclusion:

A design that has permitted consistent water intrusion onto safety-critical engine and electrical components across a major commercial vehicle platform for over a decade is not an acceptable engineering standard. Given the size and weight of these vehicles — many operated commercially and carrying passengers or heavy cargo — the consequences of power steering loss, electrical failure, or mechanical failure are severe.

I respectfully request that NHTSA:

1. Open or expand an investigation into the ProMaster cowl water intrusion defect across all affected model years (2014–present);
2. Require Stellantis to produce all related internal engineering reports, dealer technical service bulletins, and warranty claim data;
3. Determine whether a recall, redesign, or mandatory repair is warranted.

I am prepared to provide photographs, dealer documentation, and any additional information requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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