

ODI Action Number: **EA02-029**

Date: **10-16-2002**

Subject: **DAIMLERCHRYSLER CORPORATION
1997 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE**

ALLEGED HOOD LATCH FAILURE

This file contains consumer letters received by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which complain of the alleged defect that is the subject of this Engineering Analysis. It also contains correspondence between this agency and the manufacturer on the subject. Portions of that correspondence may be withheld where the manufacturer has claimed that they are confidential pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(4), which exempts from disclosure confidential commercial and financial information. Additional documents relating to this Engineering Analysis may exist, but have not been included in this public file.

If you have any information or concerns you would like to discuss with NHTSA staff, please call the

TOLL FREE AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE

800-424-9393

(In the Washington, DC metropolitan area, please call 202-366-0123)

Also, if you wish to discuss the investigation with NHTSA staff, the HOTLINE contact representative will have a technical staff member return your telephone call.

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U.S. Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

ODI RESUME

INVESTIGATION: EA02-029

DATE OPENED: 16-Oct-02 DATE CLOSED:

SUBJECT: Hood Latch Failure

PROMPTED BY: PE02-045 (Cheryl Tuosto)

PRINCIPAL ENGINEER: Cheryl Tuosto

MANUFACTURER: DaimlerChrysler Corporation

MODEL(S): Jeep Grand Cherokee

MODEL YEAR(S): 1997

VEHICLE POPULATION: 262,135

PROBLEM DESCRIPTION: The hood latch assembly on model year (MY) 1997 Jeep Grand Cherokee sport utility vehicles allegedly fail, causing the hood to open without warning while the vehicle is in motion.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	DaimlerChrysler	TOTAL
COMPLAINTS:	1	18	19
CRASHES:	0	0	0
INJ. CRASHES:	0	0	0
# INJURIES:	0	0	0
FATAL CRASHES	0	0	0
# FATALITIES	0	0	0
FIRES	0	0	0
OTHERS	0	0	0

ACTION: An Engineering Analysis (EA) has been opened.

ENGINEER: *Cheryl Tuosto* DIV CHIEF: *[Signature]*

OFFICER: *[Signature]*

DATE: *10/16/02*

DATE: *10/16/02*

DATE: *10-16-02*

SUMMARY REPORT: See attached summary.

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SUMMARY

BACKGROUND: ODI opened PE02-045 based on eight (8) complaints of alleged primary and secondary hood latch failure in MY 1996-1998 Jeep Grand Cherokee vehicles, which caused the hood to open unexpectedly. Two (2) additional complaints for the alleged defect in the subject vehicles were received by ODI after the investigation was opened. Although none of the reported incidents resulted in crashes or injuries, the failure of both hood latches could cause the driver to lose driver visibility and possibly crash, which could result in property damage, injuries, and possibly death.

As part of PE02-045, an Information Request (IR) was sent to DaimlerChrysler on 29-May-02 and a partial response was received on 16-Jul-02. The remainder of the information requested was provided from 31-Jul-02 through 30-Sep-02. Since the hood latch assembly for the subject vehicles was the same for MY 1993-1998 vehicles, most of the information requested in the IR pertained to those model years.

COMPLAINT ANALYSIS: ODI's data analysis generally showed low hood fly-up complaint rates; however, the Preliminary Evaluation revealed the complaint rate for MY 1997 Jeep Grand Cherokee vehicles was significantly higher than the average rate for the three (3) previous years. Approximately 95% of MY 1997 complaints involved vehicles built from September 1996 through January 1997. In addition, 79% of MY 1997 complaints originated in salt belt states, whereas the average for the previous three (3) years was 50%.

As part of their evaluation, ODI conducted an analysis on data from a major insurance company, which showed that the number of paid claims regarding a hood fly-up condition on MY 1997 Jeep Grand Cherokees was 2.4 times the average for MYs 1994-1996.

WARRANTY ANALYSIS: Although a review of MY 1993-1998 warranty claims data did not reveal any significant issues, the average vehicle mileage and age for hood fly-up complaints was out of the warranty period. The average vehicle mileage was approximately 45,000 miles and the average vehicle age was 3.3 years.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION: In light of these findings, an Engineering Analysis is being opened for MY 1997 Jeep Grand Cherokee vehicles to further evaluate the casual factors and trend of the alleged defect in these vehicles.