



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration**

## ODI RESUME

Investigation: BA03-023  
Prompted By: PE03-032  
Date Opened: 11/19/2003 Date Closed: 02/11/2005  
Principal Investigator: Peter Kivett  
Subject: Upper Ball Joint Separation

Manufacturer: DaimlerChrysler Corporation  
Products: MY 1997-2003 Dakota and MY 1998-2003 Durango  
Population: 1,788,534

Problem Description: The front suspension upper ball joint allegedly separates while driving.

### FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	90	94	164
Crashes/Fires:	11	5	14
Injury Incidents:	2	2	3
# Injuries:	3	3	4
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	0	0

\*Description of Other:

Action: This Engineering Analysis is closed. Recall 04V-596.

Engineer: Peter Kivett *(Signature)*  
Div. Chief: Jeffrey L. Quandt  
Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 02/10/2005  
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Summary: DaimlerChrysler Corporation (DCC) is recalling the target population of approximately 600,000 model year 2000 through 2003 Durango and Dakota vehicles with four-wheel drive to replace the front suspension upper ball joints with redesigned parts that do not have the joint integrity concerns and have substantially improved joint retention capacity (NHTSA Recall No. 04V-596). Though DCC does not admit to a safety-defect in the subject components, ODI believes that the facts in this investigation show otherwise.

Because of the low rates of separation incidents in the remaining subject vehicles, a safety-related defect has not been identified in those populations and further use of agency resources does not appear to be warranted. The closing of this investigation does not constitute a finding by NHTSA that no safety-related defect exists in those vehicles. The agency reserves the right to take further action if warranted by the circumstances.

For additional information, see the attached closing report.

*THK @ 2:15  
FEB 11th 05*