



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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: EA 04-013
Prompted By: RQ04-001
Date Opened: 06/04/2004 Date Closed: 05/25/2005
Principal Investigator: Michael Lee
Subject: Driver Air Bag Clockspring Failure

Manufacturer: DaimlerChrysler Corporation
Products: 1998-2000 Dodge Caravan and Grand Caravan, Plymouth Voyager and Grand Voyager, and Chrysler Town and Country, built between March 1998 and August 2000
Population: 1,280,934

Problem Description: Failure of the driver air bag clockspring.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	539	1744	2283
Crashes/Fires:	..	6	7
Injury Incidents:	..	6	7
# Injuries:	..	6	7
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	1	0	1

*Description of Other: Report of driver fatality in frontal/rollover crash (see page 2 for details).

Action: This Engineering Analysis has been closed (Recall No. 04V-480).

Engineer: Michael Lee *MLL*

Date: 05/25/2005

Div. Chief: Thomas Z. Cooper

Date: 05/25/2005

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 05/25/2005

Summary: The driver air bag clockspring can develop an open-circuit condition resulting in nonfunctional driver-side frontal air bag, horn, cruise control (if equipped), and/or steering wheel radio control (if equipped). In its October 5, 2004 letter to NHTSA, DaimlerChrysler stated that it will conduct a safety recall and replace the clockspring assembly on all MY 1998.5-2000 DaimlerChrysler minivans, built between March 1998 and August 2000, with 70,000 miles or less. It will also provide a lifetime warranty for this component on MY 1998.5-2000 minivans, regardless of mileage. The details of the corrective action are described in DaimlerChrysler's letter (see Recall No. 04V-480).

The agency believes that further expenditure 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 with respect to those vehicles covered only by the lifetime warranty. The agency will take further action if warranted by the circumstances.

See page 2 for additional information.

Summary (continued): The clockspring's internal ribbon of wires can break during normal usage and result in an open-circuit condition. This will illuminate the air bag warning lamp and cause the driver-side air bag to fail to deploy in crashes for which air bag systems are designed to provide occupant protection.

The crash noted as "other" on page 1 was a rollover incident in which the front of the vehicle impacted with a ditch. The complaint alleged that the driver-side air bag did not deploy while the passenger-side air bag deployed. The cause of driver's death was positional asphyxia however, and therefore, does not appear to be related to the driver-side air bag non-deployment.