



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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 04-039
 Prompted By: IB04-011
 Date Opened: 04/13/2004 Date Closed: 08/26/2004
 Principal Investigator: PETER KIVETT
 Subject: False Park

Manufacturer: DaimlerChrysler
 Products: 2003-04 Dodge Ram 2500/3500 with Automatic Transmission
 Population: 183,058

Problem Description: The vehicle may experience a reverse powered rollaway incident after an attempted shift into "Park" with the key still in the ignition and the engine running.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	9	46	50
Crashes/Fires:	6	42	42
Injury Incidents:	2	3	3
# Injuries:	2	3	3
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	0	0

*Description of Other:

Action: This Preliminary Evaluation has been upgraded to an Engineering Analysis.

Engineer: Peter Kivett
 Div. Chief: Jeffrey L. Quandt
 Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 08/26/2004
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Summary: There have been 50 complaints to ODI and DaimlerChrysler alleging incidents of reverse powered rollaway in subject vehicles that were parked with the engine running and the parking brake disengaged. The incidents are alleged to have resulted in 42 crashes and 3 injuries.

According to DaimlerChrysler, incident vehicle inspections have not identified any misadjusted or broken parts. A typical incident is believed to involve the following set of conditions: (1) with the vehicle on a relatively level surface, an attempted shift into park inadvertently places the transmission in a position between the "reverse" and "park" gear detents; (2) the driver exits the vehicle with the key in the ignition, the engine running, and the parking brake disengaged; and (3) after some delay, the vehicle begins traveling rearward. In prior investigations of other DaimlerChrysler products, reverse motion was found to result from a gradual pressurization of the reverse circuit ("hydraulic reverse").

DaimlerChrysler attributes the incidents to operator error in using a system that functioned as designed. According to DaimlerChrysler, the alleged defect cannot occur if the driver: (1) shifts fully into park as indicated by end of shifter Travel slam, the forward throw of the shift lever, and/or the illumination of the park indication in the "PRNDL" display; (2) removes the key from the ignition; (3) turns the engine "off;" or (4) engages the parking brake.

The subject vehicles are equipped with: (1) DaimlerChrysler's "rc"-specific transmissions that have been the subject of two previous ODI reverse powered rollaway investigations (EA96-006 & EA01-017); and (2) a column mounted shift mechanism with an electronic gear position indicator ("PRNDL") that is located in the dash display directly forward of the steering wheel. Two peer populations of Dodge Ram pickup trucks were analyzed for comparison with the subject vehicles: (1) MY 2001-02 Ram 2500/3500 pickup trucks equipped with similar transmissions, but a different shifter with a mechanical "PRNDL;" and (2) MY 2003-04 Ram 1500 pickup trucks equipped with the same shifter as the subject vehicles but different transmissions. The complaint rate in the subject vehicles is significantly higher than in the two peer populations. This investigation has been upgraded to an engineering analysis.

VLS
8/17/04