



U.S. Department
of Transportation

National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

JAN 21 2005

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Mr. Jerry Miller
Warranty / Customer Service
Haulmark Industries, Inc.
P. O. Box 281
Bristol, IN 46507

NVS-214tb
EA05-001

Dear Mr. Miller,

This letter is to inform you that the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has opened an Engineering Analysis (EA05-001) to investigate wheel separations that have occurred in cargo trailers manufactured by Haulmark Industries, Inc.

According to the information that Haulmark Industries, Inc. ("Haulmark") provided to ODI on September 27, 2004 during Preliminary Evaluation (PE04-059), three wheel separations have occurred within the 1,323 cargo trailers that Haulmark manufactured in model years 2003 through 2004.

During this same period, Haulmark's records indicate that Haulmark manufactured 24,861 cargo trailers equipped with steel wheels and that none of these vehicles experienced a wheel separation.

Following is a summary of the warranty claims for vehicles equipped with aluminum wheels.

**Haulmark Industries Warranty Claim Count
and Incident Rate for Trailers Equipped with Aluminum Wheels**

Model Year	Separation Incidents	Production	Rate per 100,000
2002	1	445	225
2003	1	524	191
2004	2	799	250
Total	4	1768	226



DOT AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE
888-DASH-2-DOT
888-327-4238

This data indicates that a small but persistent number of wheel separations have and continue to occur in Haulmark vehicles equipped with aluminum wheels.

ODI cannot be certain that future incidents will not occur without monitoring this issue and obtaining additional information from Haulmark Industries.

Newly Reported Incidents-

In light of the above information, ODI is requesting Haulmark to monitor the field performance of Haulmark vehicles for wheel loosening and/or separation reports and promptly notify ODI of all newly reported wheel loosening and/or separation incidents (with incident details), regardless of wheel type and regardless of the suspected cause, that are reported to Haulmark, or which have been reported to Haulmark for a fifteen-month period.

This reporting obligation began on September 27, 2004 and will terminate on December 31, 2005.

ODI requests prompt notification of any new incidents since there is a high likelihood that ODI would send a team to inspect the affected vehicle and/or relevant wheel end components and would like to perform this inspection as soon as possible before repairs are performed, parts are lost or re-used, etc. Accordingly, Haulmark must notify ODI within 48 hours when Haulmark learns of a wheel separation due to any cause, whether or not confirmed, regardless of vehicle age, and whether or not loosening or breakage of wheel mounting nuts and/or wheel mounting studs is the suspected cause.

If Haulmark is aware of any wheel separation incidents that have occurred since September 27, 2004 and the receipt of this Information Request, please provide that information in response to Request No.1.

This request is ongoing and terminates on December 31, 2005 but may be extended if circumstances warrant.

Each notification should be e-mailed to tom.bowman@nhtsa.dot.gov (phone 202-366-6961). The notification should provide as much of the following incident information as possible. Timeliness is critical. Any of the requested information that is not immediately available at the time of initial incident notification must be provided as soon as it becomes available.

Each notification should, at a minimum, include the following information:

1. Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) of trailer;
2. Build date of trailer;
3. Owner's name, address, and phone number;
4. Date of incident;
5. Location of incident;
6. Whether any property damage, personal injuries fatalities are alleged to have resulted from the incident;
7. Current location of trailer, wheel mounting nuts and studs, and separated wheel;
8. Name of Haulmark's supplier of the axle assembly and the part number of the axle assembly installed in the incident vehicle;
9. Name of Haulmark's supplier of the wheels and the part number of the wheels installed in the incident vehicle;
10. Description of incident.

Information Requested –

ODI is also requesting certain additional information from Haulmark Industries.

Unless otherwise stated in the text, the following definitions apply to these information requests:

- **Subject vehicle(s)**: all cargo trailers manufactured by Haulmark Industries since January 1, 2000 and sold or leased in the United States.
- **Subject components**: the wheels, brake drums or brake rotors, hubs, wheel mounting studs, and/or wheel mounting nuts installed in subject vehicles
- **Haulmark Industries, Inc. ("Haulmark")**: all of its past and present officers and employees, whether assigned to its principal offices or any of its field or other locations, including all of its divisions, subsidiaries (whether or not incorporated) and affiliated and all of their headquarters, regional, zone and other offices and their employees, and all agents, contractors, consultants, attorneys and law firms and other persons engaged directly or indirectly (e.g., employee to a consultant) by or under the control of Haulmark Industries (including all business units and persons previously referred to), who are or, in or after 2000 were involved in any way with any of the following related to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles:

- a. Design, engineering, analysis, modification or production (e.g. quality control);
 - b. Testing, assessment or evaluation;
 - c. Consideration, or recognition of potential or actual defects, reporting, record-keeping and information management, (e.g., complaints, field reports, warranty information, part sales), analysis, claims, or lawsuits; or
 - d. Communication to, from, or intended for zone representatives, fleets, dealers, or other field locations, including but not limited to people who have the capacity to obtain information from dealers.
- **Alleged defect:** loosening or separation of the wheels
 - **Document:** "Document(s)" is used in the broadest sense of the word and shall mean all original written, printed, typed, recorded, or graphic matter whatsoever, however produced or reproduced, of every kind, nature, and description, and all non-identical copies of both sides thereof, including, but not limited to, papers, letters, memoranda, correspondence, communications, electronic mail (e-mail) messages (existing in hard copy and/or in electronic storage), faxes, mailgrams, telegrams, cables, telex messages, notes, annotations, working papers, drafts, minutes, records, audio and video recordings, data, databases, other information bases, summaries, charts, tables, graphics, other visual displays, photographs, statements, interviews, opinions, reports, newspaper articles, studies, analyses, evaluations, interpretations, contracts, agreements, jottings, agendas, bulletins, notices, announcements, instructions, blueprints, drawings, as-builts, changes, manuals, publications, work schedules, journals, statistical data, desk, portable and computer calendars, appointment books, diaries, travel reports, lists, tabulations, computer printouts, data processing program libraries, data processing inputs and outputs, microfilms, microfiches, statements for services, resolutions, financial statements, governmental records, business records, personnel records, work orders, pleadings, discovery in any form, affidavits, motions, responses to discovery, all transcripts, administrative filings and all mechanical, magnetic, photographic and electronic records or recordings of any kind, including any storage media associated with computers, including, but not limited to, information on hard drives, floppy disks, backup tapes, and zip drives, electronic communications, including but not limited to, the Internet and shall include any drafts or revisions pertaining to any of the foregoing, all other things similar to any of the foregoing, however denominated by Haulmark Industries, any other data compilations from which information can be obtained, translated if necessary, into a usable form and any other documents. For purposes of this request, any

document which contains any note, comment, addition, deletion, insertion, annotation, or otherwise comprises a non-identical copy of another document shall be treated as a separate document subject to production. In all cases where original and any non-identical copies are not available,

"document(s)" also means any identical copies of the original and all non-identical copies thereof. Any document, record, graph, chart, film or photograph originally produced in color must be provided in color. Furnish all documents whether verified by the manufacturer or not. If a document is not in the English language, provide both the original document and an English translation of the document.

- **Other Terms:** To the extent that they are used in these information requests, the terms "claim," "consumer complaint," "dealer field report," "field report," "fire," "fleet," "good will," "make," "model," "model year," "notice," "property damage," "property damage claim," "rollover," "type," "warranty," "warranty adjustment," and "warranty claim," whether used in singular or in plural form, have the same meaning as found in 49 CFR 579.4.

In order for my staff to evaluate the alleged defect and determine whether the part 573 Report was filed late, certain information is required. Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30166, please provide numbered responses to the following information requests. When documents are produced, the documents shall be produced in an identified, organized manner that corresponds with the organization of this information request letter (including all individual requests and subparts). When documents are produced and the documents would not, standing alone, be self-explanatory, the production of documents shall be supplemented and accompanied by explanation.

Please repeat the applicable request verbatim above each response.

After Haulmark's response to each request, identify the source of the information and indicate the last date the information was gathered.

To the extent possible, provide the requested information in Microsoft Access or Excel 2000 electronic format.

Vehicle Specification Information for Model Year 2003 – 2004 vehicles that have experienced a wheel separation –

Note: Based on the information that Haulmark provided to ODI on October 8, 2004, this list should summarize the vehicle information for three vehicles and information about the vehicles that have experienced a wheel separation, if any, that have been reported to Haulmark since September 27, 2004.

1. Provide the following information for each vehicle manufactured by Haulmark Industries in model year 2003 and 2004 that has experienced a wheel separation:
 - (a) the complete Vehicle Identification Number (VIN);
 - (b) the number of trailer axles installed in the vehicle;
 - (c) the manufacturing or assembly site at which the wheels were installed to the vehicle;
 - (d) the Gross Axle Weight Rating (GAWR) for each of the axles installed in the vehicle;

Wheel Information

- (e) Haulmark's part number for the wheels installed in the vehicle;
- (f) the supplier of the wheels installed;
- (g) the supplier's part number for the wheels installed;
- (h) a brief description of the material composition of the wheels installed;
- (i) the nominal diameter of the mounting holes, the number of holes, mounting circle, and offset for the wheels installed;
- (j) state whether the wheel is hub piloted or stud piloted;

Hub / Axle Information

- (k) Haulmark's part number for the
 - (i) hub or
 - (ii) integral hub-brake drum or
 - (iii) integral hub-brake rotor or
 - (iv) axle assembly (if the hub is supplied to Haulmark as part of a complete axle assembly;
- (l) the supplier of the hub, integral hub-drum, integral hub-rotor or axle assembly identified in response to (k) above;

- (m) the supplier's part number for the hub, integral hub-drum, integral hub-rotor or axle assembly identified in response to (k) above;

Wheel Mounting Stud Information

- (n) Haulmark's part number(s) for the wheel mounting studs installed;
- (o) the supplier of the wheel mounting studs provided
- (p) the supplier's part number(s) for the wheel mounting studs installed;
- (q) a description of the nominal diameter, thread count and thread type of the wheel mounting studs installed;
- (r) a description of the material composition (material and grade) of the wheel mounting studs installed;
- (s) a description of any plating or coatings applied to the wheel mounting studs installed;

Wheel Mounting Nut Information

- (t) Haulmark's part number for the wheel mounting nuts installed;
- (u) the supplier of the wheel mounting nuts provided;
- (v) the supplier's part number for the wheel mounting nuts installed;
- (w) a description of the configuration of the wheel mounting including nominal diameter, height, thread count, thread type, description of nut profile at the contact point with the wheel;
- (x) a description of the material composition (material and grade) of the wheel mounting nuts installed;
- (y) a description of any plating or coatings applied to the wheel mounting nuts installed.

Provide this information on a diskette or CD-ROM in Microsoft 2000 Access or Excel electronic format labeled, "EA05-001, Request No. 1, "Vehicle Specification Information for Model Year 2003 – 2004 vehicles that have experienced a wheel separation."

2. For each wheel separation incident involving a 2003, 2004 or 2005 model year Haulmark vehicle (Haulmark reported four incidents as of September 27, 2004), state the number of vehicles that Haulmark manufactured that were equipped with the same part numbered hub AND the same part numbered wheels AND were manufactured in the same model year as the incident vehicle.

Manufacturer's Assembly Processes -

3. Provide a copy of Haulmark's wheel mounting and assembly procedures, including quality control procedures, for vehicles equipped with (a) aluminum wheels and (b) steel wheels manufactured in Model Year 2000.

Include any instructions that Haulmark provides to transporters, dealers, and vehicle owners.

4. Provide a copy of Haulmark's current (2005 model year) wheel mounting and assembly procedures, including quality control procedures, for vehicles equipped with (a) aluminum wheels and (b) steel wheels.

Include any instructions that Haulmark provides to transporters, dealers, and vehicle owners.

Manufacturer's Changes in Assembly Processes – Model Year 2000 to Present -

5. Describe all modifications and/or changes made by, or on behalf of, Haulmark Industries in the wheel installation and assembly processes and quality control procedures, including any instructions that Haulmark Industries provides to transporters, dealers, and vehicle owners, described in the responses to Requests Nos. 3 and 4.

Manufacturer's Changes in Wheel End Components -

6. Describe all modifications or changes made by, or on behalf of, Haulmark in the design, material composition, manufacture, quality control, supply sources, etc. of each of the wheel end component(s) (i.e., the wheels, axle hubs, wheel mounting studs and/or wheel mounting nuts), from Model Year 2000 to date, which relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject components.

For each such modification or change, provide the following information:

- a) The date or approximate date on which the modification or change was incorporated into production;
- b) A detailed description of the modification or change;

- c) The reason(s) for the modification or change;
- d) The part numbers (service and engineering) of the original component;
- e) The part number (service and engineering) of the modified component;
- f) Whether the original unmodified component was withdrawn from production and/or sale, and if so, when;
- g) When the modified component was made available as a service component; and,
- h) Whether the modified component can be interchanged with earlier production components.

Also, provide the above information for any modification or change that Haulmark is aware of which may be incorporated into production within the next 120 days.

Manufacturer's Investigations -

- 7. Describe and furnish a copy of all examinations, inspections, evaluations, etc. performed on the wheel mounting studs, wheel mounting nuts, axle(s), hubs, and/or wheel(s) installed on Haulmark vehicles that have experienced a wheel separation.
- 8. Describe all assessments, analyses, tests, test results, studies, surveys, simulations, investigations, inquiries and/or evaluations (collectively, "actions") that relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles that have been conducted, are being conducted, are planned, or are being planned by, or for, Haulmark. For each such action, provide the following information:
 - (a) Action title or identifier;
 - (b) The actual or planned start date;
 - (c) The actual or expected end date;
 - (d) Brief summary of the subject and objective of the action;
 - (e) Engineering group(s)/supplier(s) responsible for designing and for conducting the action; and
 - (f) A copy of the investigation report, findings and/or conclusions resulting from the action.

Notices -

- 9. Produce copies of all service, warranty, and other documents that relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles, that Haulmark has received from suppliers or other entities

10. Produce copies of all service, warranty, and other documents that relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles, that Haulmark has issued to any dealers, regional or zone offices, field offices, fleet purchasers, or other entities. This includes, but is not limited to, bulletins, advisories, informational documents, training documents, or other documents or communications, with the exception of standard shop manuals. Also include the latest draft copy of any communication that Haulmark is planning to issue within the next 120 days.

This letter is being sent to Haulmark pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30166, which authorizes NHTSA to conduct any investigation that may be necessary to enforce Chapter 301 of Title 49 and to request reports and the production of things. It constitutes a new request for information. Haulmark's failure to respond promptly and fully to this letter could subject Haulmark to civil penalties pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30165 or lead to an action for injunctive relief pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30163. (Other remedies and sanctions are available as well.) Please note that maximum civil penalties under 49 U.S.C. § 30165 have increased as a result of the recent enactment of the Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation (TREAD) Act, Public Law No. 106-414 (signed November 1, 2000). Section 5(a) of the TREAD Act, codified at 49 U.S.C. § 30165(b), provides for civil penalties of up to \$5,000 per day, with a maximum of \$15 million for a related series of violations, for failing or refusing to perform an act required under 49 U.S.C. § 30166. This includes failing to respond to ODI information requests.

If Haulmark cannot respond to any specific request or subpart(s) thereof, please state the reason why it is unable to do so. If on the basis of attorney-client, attorney work product, or other privilege, Haulmark does not submit one or more requested documents or items of information in response to this information request, Haulmark must provide a privilege log identifying each document or item withheld, and stating the date, subject or title, the name and position of the person(s) from, and the person(s) to whom it was sent, and the name and position of any other recipient (to include all carbon copies or blind carbon copies), the nature of that information or material, and the basis for the claim of privilege and why that privilege applies.

Haulmark's response to this letter, in duplicate, together with a copy of any confidentiality request, must be submitted to this office by April 5, 2005. Please refer to EA05-001 in Haulmark's response to this letter. If Haulmark finds that it is unable to provide all of the information requested within the time allotted, Haulmark must request an extension from me at (202) 366-4933 no later than five

business days before the response due date. If Haulmark is unable to provide all of the information requested by the original deadline, it must submit a partial response by the original deadline with whatever information Haulmark then has available, even if an extension has been granted.

If Haulmark claims that any of the information or documents provided in response to this information request constitute confidential commercial material within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(4), or are protected from disclosure pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1905, Haulmark must submit supporting information together with the materials that are the subject of the confidentiality request, in accordance with 49 CFR Part 512, to the Office of Chief Counsel (NCC-113), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5219, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Haulmark is required to submit two copies of the documents containing allegedly confidential information (except only one copy of blueprints) and one copy of the documents from which information claimed to be confidential has been deleted.

If you have any technical questions concerning this matter, please call Mr. Tom Bowman of my staff at (202) 366-6961.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathleen DeMeter for".

Kathleen DeMeter, Director
Office of Defects Investigation
National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration