



U.S. Department
of Transportation

National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

Memorandum

Subject: **Test Request: Identify Failure Mechanism of Stuck Seat
Belt Buckle**

Date: **AUG - 3 2006**

From: 
Kathleen C. DeMeter, Director
Office of Defects Investigation

Reply to
Attn. of:

NVS-212jfa
EA05-022

To: Michael Monk, Director
Vehicle Research and Test Center

This memorandum requests the Vehicle Research and Test Center (VRTC) to conduct the testing as described below.

BACKGROUND: On December 27, 2005, the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) upgraded Preliminary Evaluation PE05-046 to Engineering Analysis EA05-022. The subject of the investigation is malfunctions of the driver's seat belt buckle in 2002 Jeep Liberty vehicles manufactured by DaimlerChrysler Corporation (DCC). The problem experiences reported by the complainants involve several failure modes. Some report that the push button gets stuck in the release (down) position and the buckle will not latch unless the button is pried back up. Some report difficulty with latching the buckle, and others report difficulty with unlatching the buckle.

SUBJECT BUCKLES: The subject buckles are an end release type manufactured by TRW.

ALLEGED DEFECT¹: Failure of the subject component(s) that either prevent or inhibit the buckle's ability to latch or unlatch, or cause the buckle to false latch.

TEST BUCKLES: ODI will furnish VRTC with two sample complaint buckles for analysis. A copy of each complaint will be provided for VRTC's information as well.

TEST OBJECTIVES: To verify and identify the existence and source of any impairment affecting the buckle's ability to latch or unlatch, or causing the buckle to false latch.

RECOMMENDED APPROACH: VRTC should prepare a test plan designed to meet the above test objective. A flexible approach may be taken, but the ODI test monitor, Mr. John Abbott, should be kept informed of all major developments that might require substantial changes to the original test plan. John can be reached on (202) 366-5221.

¹ Alleged defect as described in EA05-022 Information Request letter to DCC.



REPORTS: A test report shall be provided upon completion of testing.

SCHEDULE: We would like to have the test work completed by September 15, 2006.
Please coordinate the test schedule with ODI.

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