



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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: EA06-008
 Prompted By: PE06-004
 Date Opened: 05/31/2006 Date Closed: 08/24/2006
 Principal Investigator: Kyle Bowker
 Subject: Front Suspension Ball Joint Separation

Manufacturer: DaimlerChrysler Corporation
 Products: 2002-2006 Jeep Liberty
 Population: 826,687

Problem Description: Alleged front suspension lower ball joint separation while driving.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	122	471	566
Crashes/Fires:	0	3	3
Injury Incidents:	0	3	3
# Injuries:	0	3	3
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	2,150	2,150

*Description Of Other: Warranty claims paid to replace or repair the front suspension lower ball joint for any or unspecified cause.

Action: This Engineering Analysis has been closed. The manufacturer will conduct a safety recall (06V-288).

Engineer: Kyle M. Bowker KMB
 Div. Chief: Jeffrey L. Quandt
 Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 08/24/2006
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Summary: On January 6, 2006, the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) opened a Preliminary Evaluation to investigate alleged front suspension lower ball joint separation in certain model year (MY) 2004 Jeep Liberty vehicles. ODI sent a letter to the manufacturer on February 7, 2006 requesting information about these and other Jeep Liberty vehicles. Consequently, the investigation was upgraded to an Engineering Analysis on May 31, 2006 and the range of subject vehicles under investigation was expanded to include all MY 2002-2006 Jeep Liberty vehicles.

ODI is aware of 566 non-duplicative complaints alleging involuntary front suspension lower ball joint separation in the subject vehicles. ODI is also aware of one non-injury crash and three alleged injury incidents (two crash incidents and one non-crash incident) related to the alleged defect resulting in minor injuries. The complaint counts reported above only include those MY 2002-03 Liberty vehicles where the alleged ball joint separation occurred after prior recall repairs were performed (see below) or if the vehicle was not included in the prior recall.

Continued on next page.

KMB

8-24-06

Summary continued:

The manufacturer conducted a prior safety recall (03V-460) to address the subject issue in certain MY 2002-03 Jeep Liberty vehicles. According to DaimlerChrysler's November 4, 2003, Defect Information Report (submitted in accordance with 49 CFR Part 573), "the constant tension lower control arm ball joints may experience a loss of lubrication which can lead to corrosion, accelerated wear and possibly separation from the steering knuckle. A constant tension ball joint which has separated from the knuckle may result in loss of vehicle directional control with minimal advanced warning." However, evidence indicates that some vehicles serviced under recall 03V-460 continued to experience involuntary ball joint separations. The manufacturer has made numerous changes in the design, material composition, manufacture, quality control, supply, and installation of the subject ball joints since the prior safety recall was initiated in an effort to improve performance with respect to sealing, lubrication, and joint retention capability.

By letter dated August 1, 2006, DaimlerChrysler Corporation has notified the agency that it will conduct a safety recall to address potentially defective front suspension lower control arm ball joints in approximately 826,687 model year 2002-2006 Jeep Liberty vehicles manufactured between January 2, 2001 and March 15, 2006, including all vehicles subject to the prior recall. The NHTSA Campaign Number assigned to this recall is 06V-288 (DaimlerChrysler recall campaign F23). DaimlerChrysler will replace both left and right front suspension lower control arm ball joints with improved components free of charge. Accordingly, this investigation is closed.