



CERTIFIED MAIL RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

SEP 2 0 2006

Stephan J. Speth, Director Vehicle Compliance and Safety Affairs DaimlerChrysler Corporation 800 Chrysler Dr. CIMS 482-00-91 Auburn Hills, MI 48326-2757 NVS-212MBS EA06-015

Dear Mr. Speth:

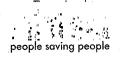
This letter is to inform you that the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has upgraded investigation RQ06-006 and has opened an Engineering Analysis (EA06-015) to continue its investigation of allegations of instrument panel fires in Dodge Durango vehicles. Note that the scope of the investigation has been expanded and now includes model year (MY) 2004-2005 Durango vehicles.

This office has identified three additional reports of an alleged instrument panel fire not previously provided to you. Copies of each of these reports have been emailed to your office and the reports numbers are provided at the end of this letter.

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

- <u>Subject vehicles</u>: All MY 2004 through 2005 Dodge Durango vehicles manufactured for sale or lease in the United States.
- <u>Subject component</u>: Instrument cluster circuit boards manufactured for the subject vehicles and all components and subcomponents that comprise the circuit board, including, but not limited to, Integrated Circuit No. Z107.
- <u>DCC</u>: DaimlerChrysler Corporation, 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 enterprises 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 of a consultant) by or under the control of DCC (including all business units and persons previously referred to), who are or, in or after





January 1, 2002, 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: Overheating of, or smoke or fire emanating from the instrument panel (IP), such as combustion or burning of material in or from a vehicle as evidence by flame. The term also includes, but is not limited to, thermal events and fire-related phenomena such as smoke, sparks, or smoldering, but does not include events and phenomena associated with a normally functioning vehicle, such as combustion of fuel within an engine or exhaust from an engine.
- **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 DCC, 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 DCC 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, certain information is required. Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30166, please provide numbered responses to the following information requests. Insofar as DCC has previously provided a document to ODI, DCC may produce it again or identify the document, the document submission to ODI in which it was included and the precise location in that submission where the document is located. 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 DCC's response to each request, identify the source of the information and indicate the last date the information was gathered.

- 1. State, by model and model year, the number of subject vehicles DCC has manufactured for sale or lease in the United States. Separately, for each subject vehicle manufactured to date by DCC, state the following:
 - a. Vehicle identification number (VIN);
 - b. Make;
 - c. Model;
 - d. Model Year;
 - e. Instrument cluster part number
 - f. Date of manufacture;
 - g. Date warranty coverage commenced; and
 - h. The State in the United States where the vehicle was originally sold or leased (or delivered for sale or lease).

Provide the table in Microsoft Access 2000, or a compatible format, entitled "PRODUCTION DATA."

- 2. State, by model and model year, the number of vehicles that have received the remedy for Recall 03V-528. Separately, for each of the vehicles covered by Recall 03V-528, state the following:
 - a. Vehicle identification number (VIN);
 - b. Make;
 - c. Model;
 - d. Model Year;
 - e. Date of manufacture;
 - f. Date warranty coverage commenced;
 - g. Date Recall 03V-528 repairs were completed;
 - h. Vehicle mileage when Recall 03V-528 repairs were completed;
 - i. The State in the United States where the vehicle was originally sold or leased (or delivered for sale or lease); and
 - j. The State in the United States where the Recall 03V-528 repairs were completed.

Provide the table in Microsoft Access 2000, or a compatible format, entitled "RECALL DATA."

- 3. State the number of each of the following, received by DCC, or of which DCC is otherwise aware, which relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles:
 - a. Consumer complaints, including those from fleet operators;
 - b. Field reports, including dealer field reports;
 - c. Reports involving a crash, injury, or fatality, based on claims against the manufacturer involving a death or injury, notices received by the manufacturer alleging or proving that a death or injury was caused by a possible defect in a subject vehicle, property damage claims, consumer complaints, or field reports;
 - d. Reports involving a fire, based on claims against the manufacturer involving a death or injury, notices received by the manufacturer alleging or proving that a death or injury was caused by a possible defect in a subject vehicle, property damage claims, consumer complaints, or field reports;
 - e. Property damage claims;
 - f. Third-party arbitration proceedings where DCC is or was a party to the arbitration; and
 - g. Lawsuits, both pending and closed, in which DCC is or was a defendant or codefendant.

For subparts "a" through "e" state the total number of each item (e.g., consumer complaints, field reports, etc.) separately. Multiple incidents involving the same vehicle are to be counted separately. Multiple reports of the same incident are also to be counted separately (i.e., a consumer complaint and a field report involving the same incident in which a crash occurred are to be counted as a crash report, a field report and a consumer complaint).

In addition, for items "c" through "g" provide a summary description of the alleged problem and causal and contributing factors and DCC's assessment of the problem, with a summary of the significant underlying facts and evidence. For items "c" and "g" identify the parties to the action, as well as the caption, court, docket number, and date on which the complaint or other document initiating the action was filed.

- 4. Separately, for each item (complaint, report, claim, notice, or matter) within the scope of your response to Request No. 3, state the following information:
 - a. DCC's file number or other identifier used;
 - b. The category of the item, as identified in Request No. 2 (i.e., consumer complaint, field report, etc.);
 - c. Vehicle owner or fleet name (and fleet contact person), address, and telephone number;
 - d. Vehicle's VIN;
 - e. Vehicle's make, model and model year;
 - f. Vehicle's mileage at time of incident;
 - g. Incident date;
 - h. Report or claim date;
 - i. Whether a crash is alleged;
 - j. Whether a fire is alleged;
 - k. Whether property damage is alleged;
 - 1. Number of alleged injuries, if any;
 - m. Number of alleged fatalities, if any; and
 - n. DCC's assessment as to whether the incident described in each item is related to the recalled cracked capacitor (C293), the integrated circuit Z107, other causes or unknown.

Provide this information in Microsoft Access 2000, or a compatible format, entitled "REQUEST NUMBER THREE DATA."

- 5. Produce copies of all documents related to each item within the scope of Request No. 3. Organize the documents separately by category (i.e., consumer complaints, field reports, etc.) and describe the method DCC used for organizing the documents.
- 6. State, by model and model year, a total count for all of the following categories of claims, collectively, that have been paid by DCC to date that relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles: warranty claims; extended warranty claims; claims for good will services that were provided; field, zone, or similar adjustments and reimbursements; and warranty claims or repairs made in accordance with a procedure specified in a technical service bulletin, customer satisfaction campaign or recall (in your response, specifically identify all claims for recall 03V-528).

Separately, for each such claim, state the following information:

- a. DCC's claim number;
- b. Vehicle owner or fleet name (and fleet contact person) and telephone number;
- c. VIN;
- d. Repair date;
- e. Vehicle mileage at time of repair;
- f. Repairing dealer's or facility's name, telephone number, city and state or ZIP code;
- g. Labor operation number;
- h. Problem code;
- i. Replacement part number(s) and description(s);
- i. Concern stated by customer; and
- k. Comment, if any, by dealer/technician relating to claim and/or repair.

Provide this information in Microsoft Access 2000, or a compatible format, entitled "WARRANTY DATA."

- 7. Describe in detail the search criteria used by DCC to identify the claims identified in response to Request No. 6, including the labor operations, problem codes, part numbers and any other pertinent parameters used. Provide a list of all labor operations, labor operation descriptions, problem codes, and problem code descriptions applicable to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles. State, by make and model year, the terms of the new vehicle warranty coverage offered by DCC on the subject vehicles (i.e., the number of months and mileage for which coverage is provided and the vehicle systems that are covered). Describe any extended warranty coverage option(s) that DCC offered for the subject vehicles and state by option, model, and model year, the number of vehicles that are covered under each such extended warranty.
- 8. Produce copies of all service, warranty, and other documents that relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles, that DCC 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 DCC is planning to issue within the next 120 days.
- 9. Describe all assessments, analyses, tests, test results, studies, surveys, simulations, investigations, inquiries and/or evaluations, including development or other pre-production tests, (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, DCC. 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 brief summary of the findings and/or conclusions resulting from the action.

For each action identified, provide copies of all documents related to the action, regardless of whether the documents are in interim, draft, or final form. Organize the documents chronologically by action.

10. Describe all modifications or changes made by, or on behalf of, DCC in the design, material composition, manufacture, quality control, supply, or installation of the subject component, from the start of production to date, which relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles. Include all modifications or changes made to production vehicles produced subsequent to the recall scope. 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 vehicle 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 DCC is aware of which may be incorporated into vehicle production within the next 120 days.

- 11. Furnish copies of all communications between DCC and each supplier of subject components for the subject vehicles that pertain to the design, manufacture, performance, durability, quality, testing, or modification of the subject component in the subject vehicles or to its application for the instrument panel. This includes, but is not limited to, discussions regarding DCC's instrument panel engineering specifications and requirements, the specifications used by the supplier(s) in producing the subject components, any factors of safety incorporated into the engineering specifications and requirements, any procedures for installing and/ or assembling the subject component, and the manufacturing and quality control processes followed by the supplier(s) (and, if applicable, by DCC) as to the subject components. If any communications on this subject were oral or were conducted electronically, provide a written transcript or summary of each such communication, and include a statement that identifies the participants and the date of the communication.
- 12. State the number of each of the following that DCC has sold that may be used in the subject vehicles by component name, part number (both service and engineering/production), model and model year of the vehicle in which it is used and month/year of sale:
 - a. Subject component; and
 - b. Any kits that have been released, or developed, by DCC for use in service repairs to the subject component/assembly.

For each component part number, provide the supplier's name, address, and appropriate point of contact (name, title, and telephone number). Also identify by make, model and model year, any other vehicles of which DCC is aware that contain the subject component, whether installed in production or in service, and state the applicable dates of production or service usage.

13. Identify all other U.S.-market vehicle models manufactured by DCC that use the subject component and provide separate responses to questions 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 above with respect to each of these other DCC models.

Provide this information in Microsoft Access 2000, or a compatible format, entitled "NON-DURANGO VEHICLES."

- 14. State whether Dodge Durango models of the same production and/or model year are manufactured and sold for use outside of the United States. If the answer is yes, please provide the following information:
 - a. State whether Dodge Durango models manufactured for markets outside of the U.S. have experienced IP fires caused by the alleged defect or other causes, including the cracked capacitor issue that is the subject of Recall No. 03V-528.
 - b. Separately state the number of alleged fires reported to Chrysler due to the alleged defect or other causes. Regarding the latter, identify those causes and separately provide the number of fires due to each cause.
 - c. State the number of alleged IP fires by country and identified cause.
 - d. Identify and describe with particularity all steps, if any, DCC has taken to address these alleged incidents.
- 15. When did DCC first become aware that IP fires on the subject vehicles might be associated with Integrated Circuit No. Z107. List and describe with particularity what actions, if any, DCC has taken to address fires caused by this circuit?
- 16. Furnish DCC's assessment of the alleged defect in the subject vehicle, including:
 - a. The causal or contributory factor(s);
 - b. The failure mechanism(s);
 - c. The failure mode(s);
 - d. The risk to motor vehicle safety that it poses;
 - e. What warnings, if any, the operator and the other persons both inside and outside the vehicle would have had indicating that either that the alleged defect was occurring or the subject component was malfunctioning; and
 - f. The reports included with this inquiry.

This letter is being sent to DCC 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. DCC's failure to respond promptly and fully to this letter could subject DCC 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 \$6,000 per day, with a maximum of \$16,375,000 for a related series of violations, for failing or refusing to perform an act required under 49

U.S.C. § 30166. See 49 CFR 578.6 (as amended by 69 Fed. Reg. 57864 (Sept. 28, 2004). This includes failing to respond to ODI information requests.

If DCC 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, DCC does not submit one or more requested documents or items of information in response to this information request, DCC 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.

DCC's response to this letter, in duplicate, together with a copy of any confidentiality request, must be submitted to this office by November 10, 2006. Please refer to EA06-015 in DCC's response to this letter. If DCC finds that it is unable to provide all of the information requested within the time allotted, DCC must request an extension from Thomas Cooper, at (202) 366-5218 no later than five business days before the response due date. If DCC 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 DCC then has available, even if an extension has been granted.

If DCC 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, DCC must submit supporting information together with the materials that are the subject of the confidentiality request, in accordance with 49 CFR Part 512, as amended (69 Fed. Reg. 21409 et seg; April 21, 2004), to the Office of Chief Counsel (NCC-113), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5219, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. DCC 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 Mark Swanson of my staff at (202) 366-7020.

Sincerely,

Kathleen C. DeMeter, Director Office of Defects Investigation

Richard Boyd

Enclosure: VOQ 10167822, 10166407, 10168181

Form Approved: O.M.B. No. 2127-0008

U.S. Department

DOT Auto Safety Hotline

Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire To Report Vehicle Safety Defects

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Date Received	Repository 🗌

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I WOULD LIKE TO REFER TO THE NHTSA INVESTIGATION # EA06015 TO SEE IF I HAVE ANY RECOURSE WITH DAIMLERCHRYSLER FOR COVERING EXPENSES FOR THIS REPAIR.

Include, if available: Police/Fire Department Report, Photos, and Repair Invoice.

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

The Privacy Act of 1974-Public Law 93-579 This information is requested pursuant to authority vested in the National Highway Traffic Safety Act and subsequent amendments. You are under no obligation to respond this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist the NHTSA in determining whether a Manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If the NHTSA proceeds with administrative enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.

Form Approved: O.M.B. No. 2127-0008

U.S. Department

DOT Auto Safety Hotline

Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire

FOR AGENCY USE ON	NLY 100148
Date Received	Repository 🗌
11-SEP-2006	Reference No. 10167822

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Include, if available: Police/Fire Department Report, Photos, and Repair Invoice.

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

The Privacy Act of 1974-Public Law 93-579 This information is requested pursuant to authority vested in the National Highway Traffic Safety Act and subsequent amendments. You are under no obligation to respond this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist the NHTSA in determining whether a Manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If the NHTSA proceeds with administrative enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 100148 **DOT Auto Safety Hotline** Repository Date Received **Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire** U.S. Department To Report Vehicle Safety Defects of Transportation 1-888-DASH-2-DOT Reference No. National Highway 24-AUG-2006 (1-888-327-4236)**Traffic Safety** INTERNET:www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline 10166407 Administration OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print) Daytime Telephone Number E-mail Address Name Address Evening Telephone Number State IN Zip Code City **NEW CASTLE** Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of this report to the manufacturer of your vehicle? In the absence of an authorization, NHTSA WILL NOT provide your name or address to the vehicle manufacturer. X NO VEHICLE INFORMATION Model Year 17 digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side Make Model DODGE **DURANGO** 2004 1D4HB48D64F10 Date Purchased Engine: Fuel Type: Dealer's Name and Telephone Number 02-AUG-04 No: Cylinders 8 Gas Original Owner State Dealer's City Zip Code X Vehicle Component Code Transmission Type X Antilock Brakes Powertrain 117000 DIGITAL INSTRUMENT PANEL AUTOMATIC 4 WHEEL DRIVE X Cruise Control Multiple Failure: 2 FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION Failure Mileage Failure Speed Incident Date(s) 23-AUG-2006 25000 ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE Tire Size (Example P215/65R15) Tire Model (Name or Number) Tire Make DOT No. (Example: DOTMAL9ABC036) Original Equipment Failure Location: Tire Component Code Tire Failure Type ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A CHILD SEAT FAILURE Model No./Name: Make: Date Manufactured: Seat Type: Installation System: Child Seat Component Code: Failed Part: APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION (Please describe in detail the incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es) and injury (ies).) Number of Persons Injured Number of Deaths Reported to Police Crash Fire X Yes No N Narrative Description of Incident(S), Crash(es), and Injury(ies). Please describe (1) events leading up to the failure, (2) failure and its consequences, and (3) what was done to correct the failure; i.e, parts repaired or replaced (and if old part is available).

DT*: THE CONTACT STATED ON TWO SEPARATE OCCASIONS, WHEN THE KEY WAS INSERTED INTO THE IGNITION AND THE KEY WAS TURNED, SMOKE CAME FROM THE INSTRUMENT PANEL. ON BOTH OCCASIONS THE ENGINE WAS NOT STARTED. ON THE SECOND INSTANCE, THE IGNITION SWITCH WAS TURNED OFF AND THE KEY REMOVED. WHEN THE CONTACT RETURNED TO THE VEHICLE, THE FRONT WAS FULL OF BLACK SMOKE, AND FIRE WAS SEEN BEHIND THE STEERING WHEEL. THE FIRE DEPARTMENT WAS CONTACTED. THE SERVICE DEALER AND

THE MANUFACTURER WERE NOTIFIED.

Include, if available: Police/Fire Department Report, Photos, and Repair Invoice.

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