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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE07-062
Date Opened: 12/17/2007
Principal Investigator: Stephen McHenry
Subject: Upper Ball Joint Separation

Manufacturer: Chrysler LLC.
Products: 2002 and 2003 Jeep Liberty 4x4
Population: 296,171 (Estimated)

Problem Description: Front Suspension upper ball joint may separate while driving.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	20		
Crashes/Fires:	0		
Injury Incidents:	0		
# Injuries:	0		
Fatality Incidents:	0		
# Fatalities:	0		
Other*:	21		

*Description Of Other: Complaints of loose upper ball joints.

Action: A Preliminary Evaluation has been opened

Engineer: *Stephen McHenry* Date: *12/17/2007*
Div. Chief: *Jeffrey L. Quandt* Date: *12/17/2007*
Office Dir.: *Kathleen C. DeMeter* Date: *12/17/2007*

Summary: ODI has received 20 complaints of upper ball joint separation on Model Year 2002 and 2003 Jeep Liberty 4x4 vehicles. Most of the complaints reported failures at 25 mph or less. However, two incidents occurred at speeds of 40 mph or greater, including one upper ball joint separation at 60 mph on an interstate. In this incident, the failure is alleged to have caused the vehicle to skid a few hundred yards with the right front wheel collapsed beneath the vehicle, narrowly missing a collision with a car in the next lane. In another incident, an upper ball joint separated while negotiating an S-turn at an estimated 40 mph, causing the right front wheel to collapse beneath the vehicle and leaving a 261 ft. skid mark.

Several complaints describe the cause of the upper ball joints separation as corrosive wear due to contamination of the lubed-for-life joint. Ten of the separations occurred in 2007 and 5 occurred in 2006. The average failure mileage for the upper ball joint separations reported to ODI is approximately 59,000 miles, ranging from a low of 28,600 miles to a high of 96,000 miles. The median failure mileage is 56,000 miles.

A Preliminary Evaluation has been opened to assess the scope, frequency and safety consequences of the alleged defect.