



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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 08-068
 Date Opened: 12/03/2008
 Principal Investigator: Sonny Murianka
 Subject: Improper Handrail Installation
 Date Closed: 01/15/2009

Manufacturer: Freightliner LLC
 Products: 2005-2010 Thomas Built C2 School Buses
 Population: 22,715

Problem Description: Passenger's drawstring may catch on handrail, resulting in the child being dragged by the bus.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

| | ODI | Manufacturer | Total |
|---------------------|-----|--------------|-------|
| Complaints: | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Crashes/Fires: | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Injury Incidents: | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| # Injuries: | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fatality Incidents: | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| # Fatalities: | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other*: | 0 | 0 | 0 |

*Description of Other: 8 complaints cited in Premier's March 25, 2008 letter to PACCAR.

Action: This PE is closed. Daimler has submitted a defect information report. Safety recall number 09V-010 has been assigned.

Engineer: Sonny Murianka Date: 01/15/2009
 Div. Chief: Richard Boyd *RB* Date: 01/15/2009
 Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter Date: 01/15/2009

Summary: This investigation was opened after a school bus district informed ODI that during a "New Bus Inspection" the handrails were found to be mounted too close to the bottom step of the bus and failed the "Drawstring Test." (The drawstring test was developed in the early 90's to ensure that children's drawstrings would not get caught in the handrail while exiting the bus.) Several other new buses were inspected and they also failed the test. Daimler took immediate action to confirm the problem and determine the scope.

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ODI has a prior history with this type of failure and opened a PE to further evaluate the report. Of particular concern was the "Scope" of the improper handrail installations.

During the investigation, ODI visited school bus fleets and area dealers and inspected suspect buses. ODI found that there were inconsistencies with the mounting of the lower portion of the handrails. This resulted in inadequate clearances between the last step and the bulkhead (wall of the bus), creating a place for a drawstring to become entangled. These findings were relayed back to Daimler/Thomas Built Buses.

After discussions with ODI and further review of the field incidents, Daimler decided to conduct a safety recall. They will order the inspection of suspect buses and repairs, as necessary, to ensure proper installation of the handrails on the affected vehicles.

This recall resolves the issues raised by this investigation. Therefore, this investigation is closed.