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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: EA08-008
Prompted by: PE07-062
Date Opened: 04/15/2008
Principal Investigator: Stephen McHenry
Subject: Upper ball joint separation

Manufacturer: Chrysler LLC.
Products: 2002 and 2003 Jeep Liberty 4X4
Population: 305,577 (estimated)

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

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	22	74	83
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:

Action: An Engineering Analysis has been opened.

Engineer: *Stephen McHenry* SMcH 4/15/08 Date: *04/15/2008*
Div. Chief: *Jeffrey L. Quandt* Date: *04/15/2008*
Office Dir.: *Kathleen C. DeMeter* Date: *04/15/2008*

Summary: ODI has received 22 complaints of upper ball joint separation on model year 2002 and 2003 Jeep Liberty 4x4 vehicles. The separation of an upper ball joint on either of the front wheels can result in the affected front wheel collapsing, resulting in vehicle disablement and a loss of vehicle control. Most of the separation incidents described in complaints have occurred at low speeds (20 mph). However, ODI has identified 5 incidents that are alleged to have occurred at speeds of 40 mph or greater, including one at 75 mph. In addition, 7 separations occurred while the driver was pulling into the flow of traffic and 2 others occurred when the driver was attempting to make a left turn across the flow of oncoming traffic. One of these complainants alleged almost being hit by an oncoming truck as a result of the vehicle suddenly being disabled in the flow of crossing traffic. Another reported the collapse of the front right wheel when making a turn caused the vehicle to swerve to the right into a ditch, narrowly missing a telephone pole.

Chrysler LLC., is continuing to investigate the cause of upper ball joint separations in the subject vehicles. ODI has upgraded the investigation to an Engineering Analysis to continue to asses the scope, frequency and safety consequences of the alleged defect.

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