

Howell, Rosa (NHTSA)

From: Clarence Ditlow <cmdiii@autosafety.org>
Sent: Tuesday, May 28, 2013 1:19 AM
To: Hershman, Larry (NHTSA); Yon, Scott (NHTSA); Borris, Frank (NHTSA); Ong, Peter (NHTSA); Smith, Daniel (NHTSA)
Cc: Michael Brooks
Subject: RE: The same and another with links included

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[REDACTED], whose father broke the passenger side window & saved one passenger in the Grand Cherokee FARS MHE Fire crash on I81, has filed a petition on change.org that now has over 100,000 signatures. Some of the comments accompanying the signatures such as the ones below indicate additional Jeep fire crashes that may or may not be in the agency's data base. I urge you to contact change.org to get more details on the Jeep fire crashes reported as part of Jenelle's petition.

She has filed a request with the Secretary's office to meet with him & present the petitions. She has asked me to accompany her.

Clarence

[REDACTED] EVANSVILLE, IN

11 days ago
Liked 18

7 years ago, my niece was burned in a Jeep in which she carried 3 small children and my mother. She was pregnant at the time and suffered a miscarriage and 3rd degree burns on her arms, face and back. The vehicle caught on fire as she was driving and Jeep withstood no responsibility.

[REDACTED] WALL TOWNSHIP, NJ

9 days ago
Liked 15

A local high school student in my area has recently suffered burns in a Jeep brand vehicle. He was stopped at a traffic light when hit from behind and a flash fire burned him. He is currently at the burn hospital.

Allowing manufacturers to keep vehicles on the road that are not safe is wrong. Not only do they risk the lives of occupants of the vehicle, they risk the lives of friends traveling with them, good samaritans and emergency personnel trying to save them.

Auto manufacturers should offer programs for owners to surrender these dangerous vehicles for the safety of all - and provide assistance for a replacement vehicle.

[REDACTED] SAN JOSE, CA

7 days ago
Liked 10

My aunt was tragically killed in this manner in her Jeep.

-----Original Message-----
From: Clarence Ditlow

Sent: Wed 5/22/2013 11:20 PM
To: Larry.Hershman@dot.gov
Cc: Michael Brooks
Subject: FW: The same and another with links included

It is a 1999 - see high light below.

Michael the FARS hunter will go get it - bet it's not coded as a fire. If this is another child in an child seat . . .

http://onlineathens.com/stories/012701/new_0127010041.shtml

Fiery crash kills mother and infant, blocks Atlanta traffic for five hours

Posted: Saturday, January 27, 2001

ATLANTA -- A Lawrenceville mother and her 15-month-old daughter were killed and rush-hour traffic was at a standstill for five hours Friday morning after a fiery wreck on Interstate 85.

The victims were identified as 37-year-old [REDACTED] of Lawrenceville and her infant daughter, [REDACTED], both passengers in a Jeep Cherokee, said Atlanta police spokesman John Quigley.

He said the driver, husband [REDACTED], was taken to Grady Memorial with burns on 75 percent of his body. He was listed in critical condition, said hospital spokeswoman Alice Morris.

"It happened in front of me," said a caller to a local talk show host, identified only as [REDACTED], who said he called 911 and jumped out of his car immediately.

"A Ford Thunderbird passed me in the HOV lane, going fast. I saw brake lights, a bang, and that quick, flames," [REDACTED] told WSB talk show host Neal Boortz.

"I jumped out and flames were coming out from the back of the Jeep. He (the husband) jumped out (full of flames) and we put them out," he said.

"I just couldn't get the passenger door open," said [REDACTED] as he began to sob. "It was not a good thing. I felt so helpless," adding that he decided not to continue on to work, instead returning to his Duluth home.

The southbound lanes of the highway were closed by the 6 a.m. crash just north of the I-75-85 connector until 8:30 a.m. when one lane was reopened, but the interstate remained gridlocked until about 11 a.m., when all lanes were reopened.

Southbound traffic on Georgia 400, a toll road that feeds into I-85 north of the crash site, also was gridlocked.

The crash began when a van lost its tire and the driver of a Saturn car slammed on brakes to avoid the tire, said Quigley. A Camry then slowed to avoid hitting the Saturn, as did the Jeep Cherokee, which swerved into the HOV lane.

He said a Thunderbird, traveling at a high-rate of speed, then hit the Cherokee in the rear, causing the gas tank to explode.

Three others were injured in the crash -- the driver and passenger in the Thunderbird and the driver of the Camry, [REDACTED] said. One of the three was listed in critical condition, the other two were listed in stable condition, [REDACTED] said.

Fire a recurrent peril in Jeep collisions

<http://www.sunjournal.com/node/205255> <<http://www.sunjournal.com/node/205255>>

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Business <<http://www.sunjournal.com/business>> |

Saturday, August 4, 2007 at 5:00 am

MILWAUKEE - Nineteen-year-old ██████████ lost her life July 3 inside a Jeep Grand Cherokee after her vehicle was struck from behind by another motorist, rupturing the Jeep fuel tank and sparking an intense fire.

It's a horrific scene that has played out at least two other times this year and twice last year in U.S. crashes involving Jeep sport utility vehicles, according to a review of news reports and interviews with automotive experts. No recall notices specific to the location of Jeep fuel tanks have been issued, and a spokesman for the Jeep parent company, DaimlerChrysler, said the vehicles meet federal design safety standards.

But automotive experts say Grand Cherokee, Cherokee and Liberty models manufactured before 2005 were alone among sport utility vehicles, including other Jeeps such as the Wrangler, in placing the fuel tank behind the rear axle. They also say they have not seen the same pattern of rear-end collision fires involving ruptured fuel tanks in other SUVs.

Sean Kane, a researcher on motor vehicle safety for attorneys and government agencies, said that while no statistics are compiled, rear-end collisions resulting in fires in the Jeep Grand Cherokee, Cherokee and Liberty models have been a recurring problem since the early 1990s.

"There is a good pattern of this," he said. "There is no question about it."

Recent similar crashes involving Jeeps include:

. March 6, 2007: A woman was killed and the driver of a 1993 Jeep Cherokee was burned when their vehicle was rear-ended and caught fire on Interstate 10 in Cabazon, Calif.

. Feb. 24, 2007: The driver of a 1996 Jeep Cherokee was killed when the vehicle was rear-ended and became fully engulfed on an interstate in Newark, N.J.

. April 8, 2006: ██████████, 40, driver of a Jeep Cherokee, was killed when the vehicle was hit from behind and caught fire on a highway in Wilmington, Del.

. Feb. 12, 2006: ██████████, 4, died and her 21-month-old sister was critically injured with 60 percent of her body burned after the 1993 Jeep Grand Cherokee she was in caught fire from a 30-mph rear-end collision on a street in Cleburne, Texas.

The ██████████ sued DaimlerChrysler, and the case is in litigation in Texas. At least two other similar lawsuits are pending in New York and Florida.

Two similar crashes in 2001 led to lawsuits in which the parties agreed to out-of-court settlements with DaimlerChrysler.

In Oct. 6, 2001, ██████████ of Jacksonville, Fla., suffered burns as a result of his 1995 Jeep Grand Cherokee being rear-ended and catching fire. Smith sued DaimlerChrysler in 2002, alleging the location of the Jeep fuel tank was poorly designed.

In Jan. 26, 2001, [REDACTED], his wife [REDACTED] and their infant daughter [REDACTED] were killed when their 1999 Jeep Cherokee was rear-ended and burst into flames on Interstate 85 in Atlanta. The [REDACTED] family sued DaimlerChrysler in June 2001, alleging the location of the fuel tank made it susceptible to rupture.

Attorneys for both cases declined to discuss the settlements.

In the [REDACTED] crash, the Chenequa, Wis., woman had just finished working out about 9 a.m. July 3 and was on her way to pick up her friend for breakfast.

Behind her on the exit ramp, 77-year-old [REDACTED] of the village of Pewaukee, Wis., was suffering a seizure at the wheel of his 2005 Ford Freestyle. As his wife [REDACTED], desperately attempted to take control of the vehicle, it slammed into the rear of [REDACTED] 2001 Grand Cherokee, rupturing its fuel tank and spewing gasoline along the pavement. [REDACTED] Jeep burst into flames and exploded after settling onto a guardrail.

"Well, you can obviously see what happened here," Waukesha County Sheriff's Detective Steve Pederson said at the crash site.

Pederson, who gestured to charred grass along the off-ramp and center divider, said [REDACTED] vehicle rolled over at least once but the Jeep was ablaze before it rolled over. He said there was no way to reach the trapped [REDACTED], whose vehicle was already engulfed in flames by the time help arrived.

The Sheriff's Department has not yet concluded its investigation into the crash, Pederson said.

When contacted for comment about the Mayer crash and several others around the country, DaimlerChrysler spokesman Max Gates said Jeep models manufactured by his company have been self-certified as meeting the minimum National Highway Traffic Safety Administration regulations on rear-end collisions.

"Attorneys allege many things," Gates said. "There is nothing inherently unsafe about the design."

NHTSA regulations require no fuel spillage after a rear-end collision involving a moving barrier traveling at 50 mph. Before October 2005, the threshold was 30 mph.

In the crash that killed [REDACTED], authorities said Eckliff was traveling at high speed when he collided with the Jeep. Investigators are still trying to determine how fast he was going, but it is thought to be at least 65 mph, based on a witness account.

Kennerly Digges, a former executive director at NHTSA and the research director at the National Crash Analysis Center at George Washington University, said that while rear-end collisions are common, rear-end collisions resulting in fires are unusual. When they do happen, he said, fires are more often engine-related rather than due to a ruptured fuel tank.

Digges said that as of the early 1990s, the Jeep Grand Cherokee, Cherokee and Liberty models and Ford's Mustang and Crown Victoria models were the only vehicles he knows of that had the fuel tank behind the rear axle.

He said many factors contribute to a vehicle fire following a collision, but if there isn't a driveshaft, the safest location for the fuel tank should be at the center of the vehicle, in front of and below the rear axle.

"It's not black and white, but based on the nature of most collisions, it should be there," he said.

Digges compared the location of the Jeep tanks to those on the 1970s Ford Pinto, which inspired recalls after rear-end crashes caused fires, and the Ford Crown Victoria police cars in 2002 that sparked an investigation by NHTSA.

Those cars, he said, had fuel tanks aft of the rear axle.

"In the end, you're better off not putting it back there," he said.

Most vehicle manufacturers relocated fuel tanks forward of the rear axle after the 1970s and 1980s to protect the tanks, he said.

Cam Cope, a board member of the National Association of Fire Investigators and an automotive historian, said many vehicle manufacturers started relocating the fuel tank in 1971 and advertised the improved "safety" of the redesign.

He said DaimlerChrysler didn't move the fuel tank of the Grand Cherokee to the front of the rear axle until the 2005 model year. The Cherokee model is no longer made. The Jeep Liberty fuel tank continues to be placed behind the rear axle, according to a dealer

service center.

From: diad@charter.net [<mailto:diad@charter.net>]
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2013 11:12 PM
To: Clarence Ditlow
Subject: RE: The same and another with links included

The other article said it was a 1999

From: Clarence Ditlow [<mailto:cmdiii@autosafety.org>]
Sent: May 22, 2013 11:09 PM
To: diad@charter.net
Subject: RE: The same and another with links included

Thanks again, I am working to get the model year of the Jeep.

From: diad@charter.net [<mailto:diad@charter.net>]
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2013 11:07 PM
To: Clarence Ditlow
Subject: The same and another with links included