

Howell, Rosa (NHTSA)

From: Hershman, Larry (NHTSA)
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2013 9:31 AM
To: Reid, Randy (NHTSA)
Cc: Howell, Rosa (NHTSA); Yon, Scott (NHTSA)
Subject: For Jeep Repositories
Attachments: FW: Indy Story; RE: Indy Story; Here's The Police Report on Indiana; Jeep ZJ Rear End Fire Crash; FW: MA Jeep Crash ; RE: MA Jeep Crash ; 2003 Jeep Grand Cherokee vin 1j8gw48n43d [REDACTED]; Another Jeep Fire/Entrapment 2002 Grand Cherokee - 3rd degree burns

Randy,

Please find attached November and December emails from CAS regarding the Jeep investigation. [Please place these emails, including their attachments](#), into the public and private repositories [for DP09005 for Jeep](#). [Please do not include this cover memo](#).

Thanks,

Larry

Larry Hershman
Office of Defects Investigation, NVS-212
Office of Vehicle Safety - Enforcement
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
Washington, DC 20590
☎ (202) 366-4929 | ✉ Larry.Hershman@dot.gov

DP09-005

12-19-2013

EMAIL TO THE FILE

CAS EMAIL 11-1-2013

&

POLICE REPORT

DP09-005

12-19-2013

EMAIL TO THE FILE

CAS EMAIL 11-1-2013

Howell, Rosa (NHTSA)

From: Clarence Ditlow <cmdiii@autosafety.org>
Sent: Friday, November 01, 2013 11:22 AM
To: Yon, Scott (NHTSA); Hershman, Larry (NHTSA); Borris, Frank (NHTSA); Ong, Peter (NHTSA)
Subject: FW: Indy Story

Note there is an August 2013 2002 Liberty serious burn rear impact crash in the story that I highlighted in yellow. It's way down. I took the images from the top & pasted them at the bottom to make it easier to see the article. Here's the direct link – I haven't looked at the online story. [13 Investigates: Recall Under Fire](#) - 11/1/13

13 Investigates: Recall under fire - 13 WTHR Indianapolis



13 Investigates: Recall under fire

Updated: Nov 01, 2013 10:30 AM EST

By Bob Segall - [bio](#) | [email](#)

INDIANAPOLIS -

Federal regulators asked Chrysler to recall millions of Jeeps for a potentially deadly defect. The automaker declined, instead offering a much different recall with a controversial remedy. Following months of denials, confusion, finger-pointing and silence, are the automaker and government now turning their backs on a dangerous problem affecting millions of families?

██████ does not remember her crash. She has no memory of the raging fire. She cannot recall the dramatic rescue.

Her first memories following the devastating accident involve waking up from a long coma in hospital bed.

Nurses were hesitant to tell ██████ why she was there.

"They kept saying 'You are OK. You are fine. You are beautiful.' And I think to myself 'Why they saying that?'" she said.

■ soon began to understand the extent of her injuries – and why nurses were trying to offer comforting words.

"When I saw me in the mirror [I] say 'Where is ■? Where is ■? What happened to me?'" she recalls, pausing for a deep breath. As the silence continues, it is clear the South Bend mother is no longer thinking about her hospital stay. She is thinking about today, and she begins crying.

"Why that happen to me? Why?" she asks.

Terrible scars

Police reports, family members and witnesses fill in the details of a horrible crash that erased much of ■ memory.

On the day of the accident, she was driving to Munster, Ind., to watch her oldest daughter's first dance competition. Her mother was in the passenger seat, and ■ 6-year-old twins were sitting behind them, strapped into their car seats.

They slowed for a passing funeral procession, but, according to police, the pick-up truck behind them did not.

Witnesses say ■ 2000 Jeep Cherokee immediately burst into flames.

Passing motorists rescued the kids and ■ mother, who escaped with relatively minor injuries.

But ■ suffered severe burns on 40 percent of her body. Doctors had to remove her ears, part of her nose, and the tips of all her fingers.

She is now covered with a patchwork of skin grafts and scars, and 20 months after the accident, ■ still feels a constant sensation of burning.

"Every day I feel on fire," she said. "It's so painful."

■ considers herself lucky.

"People are burning to death"

Across the country, people have died in fiery crashes involving Jeeps like ■

"As soon as these vehicles went on the road, they started crashing and burning," said Clarence Ditlow, longtime director of the [Center for Auto Safety](#).

The non-profit consumer safety organization says it has tracked more than 475 deaths involving older model Jeeps dating back to 1993.

Among the tragic crashes:

* ■ 4, died in the backseat of a 1999 Jeep Cherokee March 6, 2012 in Bainbridge, Georgia. His aunt was driving him to tennis lessons when she stopped to turn left and a Dodge Dakota slammed into the back of the SUV. An attorney for ■ family says his only injury from the impact itself was a broken leg. Witnesses say he was screaming for help from his booster seat.

* Witness say they also saw and heard [REDACTED], 18, and [REDACTED] screaming for help when flames spread quickly through [REDACTED] 1998 Jeep Grand Cherokee. They were able to save [REDACTED] son after a tractor-trailer hit the vehicle near Winchester, Virginia March 6, 2012.

* Attorneys for [REDACTED], 24, say his injuries from a rear-impact crash in Lake Mary, Florida were not life-threatening. They say he was alive and moving after the crash, but he couldn't get out of the vehicle and died in the fire. [REDACTED] cousin, [REDACTED], was driving the 1997 Jeep Grand Cherokee and survived with serious burns.

CAS's extensive research and detailed [appeals](#) prompted the government to investigate the vehicles due to concerns over their gas tanks.

On millions of older Jeeps, the gas tank is located at the far rear of the SUV, behind the rear axle and just inches from the back bumper. Consumer advocates say the position of the gas tank puts the Jeeps at an increased risk of fire because the tanks are more vulnerable to punctures and leaks during a rear-impact crash.

For years, CAS has been [asking Chrysler and the government](#) to do something about it.

"People are burning to death in Jeeps that need not burn to death in Jeeps," Ditlow said. "There is no question this should be recalled."

Victims' families have been begging for a recall, too. They say even in high-speed crashes, people should be able to escape without catastrophic injuries.

But [REDACTED] attorney says many crash victims cannot do that because they're trapped by a raging fire caused by a ruptured gas tank.

"[REDACTED] did not suffer a single broken bone, not one," said attorney Ines Murphy. "She should have opened her door and walked out, but instead you're stuck in a burning car. This car is not safe and needs to be recalled."

[REDACTED] is still waiting for a recall on the Cherokee, but this summer, government regulators took action on two other Jeeps with gas tanks just like hers.

After a 3-year investigation confirmed at least 51 fatal rear-impact crashes involving fires in Jeeps, the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration [sent a letter to Chrysler](#) with its preliminary findings. It said the 1993-1998 Grand Cherokee and 2002-2007 Liberty are "poor performers" in terms of fatalities, fires and fuel leaks in rear-impact crashes. NHTSA concluded "there is a performance defect and a design defect" involving the Jeep gas tanks, and the federal agency formally requested a safety recall.

Chrysler's surprising response

Chrysler said no, declining NHTSA's request to recall 2.7 million Jeeps.

The automaker [sent federal regulators a detailed response](#), insisting the vehicles in question "are safe and do not contain a defect." The company said the vehicles' performance is "reasonable and comparable" to other SUVs, according to federal crash data. Chrysler also NHTSA most of the deadly fires included in the government's analysis resulted from crash forces that far exceeded the federal fuel leak standard in effect at the time the Jeeps were designed and manufactured.

While Chrysler is allowed to challenge and even reject the government's request for a recall, it is the first time in recent memory that an automaker has done so.

Despite its claim that the vehicles are not defective, Chrysler did agree to a more [limited recall of about 1.5 million older-model Jeep Grand Cherokees and Libertys](#). That recall involves a rather unusual remedy: installing a trailer hitch.

According to Chrysler, the hitch may provide more protection in the back of the vehicle to help better protect the gas tank.

Chrysler said it would begin contacting dealers and customers in July, but four months later, no one has heard anything about it.

WTHR employees who own Jeeps included in the limited recall have not received a recall notice from Chrysler. One of the employees recently visited several local Jeep dealers to see if Chrysler has provided them with recall information.

"They haven't given us any details on it whatsoever," said a service technician at one of the dealerships.

"We have nothing yet," replied a service representative at another dealer.

"It's hard to ask Chrysler about it because they have not even admitted to the problem," said a technician at a third dealership. "So they're certainly not going to have a solution to a problem they haven't even confessed to. We don't even know if there's going to be a recall."

Chrysler won't meet with 13 Investigates to discuss its recall, but the automaker insists the recall is coming. A company spokesman would not cite a specific timeframe, but he did send WTHR the following statement:

"Preparations continue to implement the announced actions, though the affected vehicles are not defective. Customers will be advised when to schedule vehicle inspections with their dealers."

Remedy called a "sham"

While [Chrysler continues to disagree with](#) the government's conclusion that some older Jeeps have a safety defect, critics say it's hard to ignore that an underlying problem still exists.

Here in Indianapolis, a 2002 Jeep Liberty burst into flames when it was rear-ended on I-465 in August – two months *after* Chrysler announced the vehicle was part of its limited recall.

The driver, [REDACTED], is still recovering from serious burns on his face, arms and hands. [REDACTED] was surprised when 13 Investigates told him about the recall.

"I had no idea. I didn't know there was a problem," he told WTHR.

As customers and dealerships wait to find out when the recall will begin, the bigger question is whether it will do any good. Will a trailer hitch actually reduce injuries and deaths in Jeeps?

"No, it doesn't help. Everyone knows that," [REDACTED] said. "Just look at [REDACTED] crash. [REDACTED] [Jeep] had a trailer hitch."

The [Center for Auto Safety doesn't like Chrysler's proposed recall](#), either.

"The trailer hitch is a sham," said Ditlow.

He says it might actually make the problem worse, pointing to accidents like the one that killed 4-year-old [REDACTED] and badly burned her sister.

When their mother's Jeep Grand Cherokee was rear-ended in Cleburne, Tex., police and Chrysler both concluded it was actually the vehicle's trailer hitch that punctured the gas tank, fueling a deadly fire.

"[REDACTED] was burned to death in a child seat in a survivable rear impact ... where there was a trailer hitch," Ditlow said. "That's proof positive that trailer hitches don't prevent fire deaths in these vehicles."

Chrysler admits recall limitations

A recent deposition by a former Chrysler engineer supports CAS's position that a trailer hitch may be a poor solution.

Francois Castaing, Chrysler's vice president for engineering in the 1990s, said that tow hitches are not intended to prevent damage to a vehicle's gas tank.

"The tow package does not protect the tank," he said in 2011. His testimony came in a wrongful death lawsuit filed by the family of [REDACTED], a New Jersey woman who died when her 1996 Grand Cherokee was rear-ended and caught fire in 2007.

WTHR asked Chrysler to explain how a trailer hitch would help prevent injuries or deaths related to rear-impact crashes. The automaker would not provide 13 Investigates with any on-the-record statement or information to answer our questions.

But in the automaker's [public filings to NHTSA](#), Chrysler acknowledged the trailer hitch it is proposing will not help protect a Jeep's rear-mounted gas tank in the types of higher-speed crashes that have resulted in most of the deadly rear-impact fires.

"The trailer hitch cannot, and will not, mitigate the risk of the high energy rear collisions identified in your recall request letter," wrote Matthew Liddane, Chrysler's vice president of vehicle concepts. Chrysler told NHTSA the hitch might "better manage the crash forces" and "incrementally improve the performance" of Jeeps in low-speed crashes.

In other public filings, Chrysler argues that some of the deadly accidents involving Jeeps equipped with trailer hitches involve after-market hitches supplied by other manufacturers.

The [recall](#) Chrysler proposed to NHTSA includes inspection and, if necessary, replacement of after-market trailer hitches already installed on the designated vehicles. Chrysler says such hitches may have sharp edges or other features that could pose a puncture risk to the nearby gas tank on older model Jeeps.

Federal regulators now silent

The questionable ability of trailer hitches to reduce the number of deaths and injuries in rear-impact collisions has prompted consumer advocates to wonder why Chrysler's recall to add trailer hitches is happening at all.

[CAS is urging NHTSA](#) to further investigate Chrysler's proposal and to test the trailer hitch remedy to determine if it has any merit. WTHR has repeatedly called NHTSA to determine if the federal agency will conduct those tests. Over the past four weeks, the agency has not returned any of 13 Investigates' phone calls, nor did it respond to WTHR's request for an on-camera interview.

Sources close to the federal agency tell Eyewitness News NHTSA has not closed its investigation into safety concerns involving gas tanks on older Jeeps, and that future action – possibly another request for a Jeep recall – may be coming in the future.

In the meantime, crash victims like [REDACTED] wonder why NHTSA and Chrysler are not doing more.

"I want them to take responsibility for all this ... and recognize that the car has a problem," she said.

"Chrysler is just playing a game of smoke and mirrors on this and it makes no sense, and even worse people are dying and being severely burned in the meantime," said Ditlow. "Recall these vehicles and do the right thing before more people burn to death."

Safer options available?

While Chrysler's proposed recall is under fire, suggestions have emerged for what could be more effective solutions.

Changing the location of the gas tank is considered the best protection against a tank rupture during a rear-impact collision.

Chrysler has already made that change in all newer model Jeeps. Grand Cherokees produced since model year 2005 and Libertys manufactured since model year 2008 now have fuel tanks placed in front of the vehicles' rear axle.

"Since then, there's not been a single known death due to fire in a rear-impact of the modified vehicles," said Ditlow.

But because of the cost to retrofit older Jeeps with modified gas tanks, Chrysler is not likely to consider that a viable option.

A more cost-effective remedy could be what's referred to as a skid plate, a thick metal shield placed around a gas tank. It's intended to protect the fuel tank from rock damage during off-road excursions but can also provide puncture protection during a crash. Skid plates costs between \$100 and \$300, depending on the model.

Chrysler already offers standard or optional skid plate packages for most of its newer Jeeps, but so far the automaker has not proposed that as a remedy for the government's concern regarding vulnerable fuel tanks on older vehicles.

Links and resources:

[Center for Auto Safety](#)

[Jeep Grand Cherokee recall petition](#)

[NHTSA letter to Chrysler - June 3, 2013](#)

[Chrysler response to recall request - June 18, 2013](#)

[Limited recall of older-model Jeep Grand Cherokees and Libertys](#)

[Chrysler white paper in reponse to NHTSA recall request - June 4, 2013](#)

[Center for Auto Safety objects to Chrysler recall plans](#)

[Chrysler letter to NHTSA on recall details - June 18, 2013](#)

[Center for Auto Safety's white paper on concerns about Chrysler recall plans](#)

January 14, 2012 | Porter County, IN | [REDACTED] constantly feels like she's burning, nearly two years after a fiery crash. Her 2000 Jeep Cherokee had a trailer hitch on the back. [REDACTED] went to Washington, D.C. to tell federal regulators her story.

Recall Under Fire: Lives Changed



does not remember her crash.

does not remember her crash.

, 4, was riding in this 1999 Jeep Grand Cherokee when he died. Witnesses say it quickly caught fire after being hit in a rear-impact crash last year.

From: Michael Brooks
Sent: Friday, November 01, 2013 10:42 AM
To: Clarence Ditlow
Subject: [REDACTED]

[13 Investigates: Recall Under Fire](#) - 11/1/13

Michael Brooks
Staff Attorney
Center for Auto Safety
1825 Connecticut Ave. NW
Suite 330
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 328-7700 x113

Howell, Rosa (NHTSA)

From: Clarence Ditlow <cmdiii@autosafety.org>
Sent: Friday, November 01, 2013 5:48 PM
To: Hershman, Larry (NHTSA)
Cc: Yon, Scott (NHTSA); Borris, Frank (NHTSA); Ong, Peter (NHTSA)
Subject: RE: [REDACTED]

Thanks – I can't tell you how good it is to see open doors.

Clarence

From: Larry.Hershman@dot.gov [mailto:Larry.Hershman@dot.gov]
Sent: Friday, November 01, 2013 5:42 PM
To: Clarence Ditlow
Cc: Scott.Yon@dot.gov; Frank.Borris@dot.gov; Peter.Ong@dot.gov
Subject: RE: [REDACTED]

Clarence,

Thank you for passing along this information. I'm attempting to get more information on the Indianapolis Liberty crash. Below are news items I found.

Thanks,
Larry

INDIANA NEWS HEADLINES

Two Injured in I-465 Crash, Fire

By Alex Brown - alex@wibc.com | @WIBC AlexBrown
8/20/2013



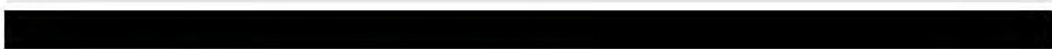
(photo courtesy IFD)

Two people were injured Monday night after a two-car crash led to one of the cars bursting into flames on I-465 on the city's north side.

The crash happened on westbound I-465 between Allisonville Road and Keystone Avenue shortly after 9:00. IFD says a Jeep driven by 66-year-old [REDACTED] hit a car driven by 23-year-old [REDACTED], pushing [REDACTED] car through a guardrail and down an embankment.

The Jeep then burst into flames. [REDACTED] was able to escape but not before being injured by the fire. He was taken to Wishard Memorial Hospital in serious condition. [REDACTED] was taken to Wishard in good condition.

Indiana State Police are investigating the cause of the crash.



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Man escapes burning SUV on I-465

Updated: Aug 20, 2013 2:16 AM EDT

INDIANAPOLIS -

A man escaped a burning Jeep following a crash on I-465 Monday night. [REDACTED] was westbound on I-465 between Allisonville Road and Keystone shortly after 9:00 p.m. when he collided with a Toyota Solara.

The Solara went through the guardrail and down an embankment. [REDACTED] Jeep then burst into flames. He was able to get out and was taken to Wishard Hospital in serious condition.

The driver of the Solara, [REDACTED], was also taken to Wishard in good condition.

State Police are still investigating the cause of the accident.



Source: IFD



Source: IFD



hurt in fiery

Indianapolis crash

Ken Nunn

- (800) 888-4878
- [Email](#)
- [Request the Police Report](#)

Written by [REDACTED]

[Marion County, Indiana](#) — August 19, 2013

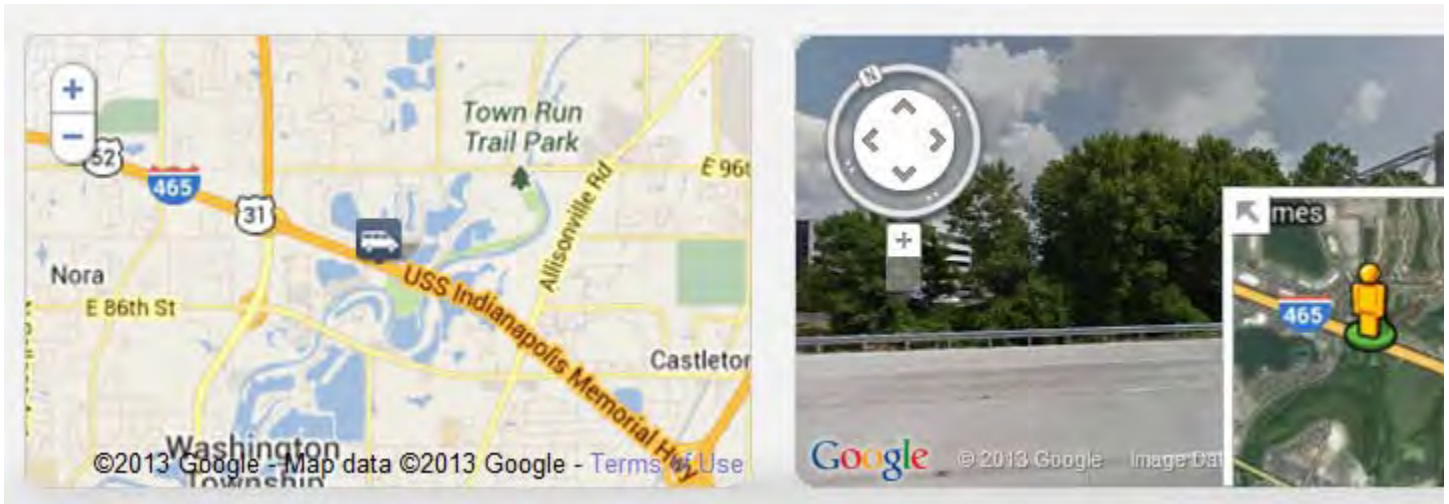
Police say two people were injured Monday during a collision in the Indianapolis area that caused one vehicle to catch fire.

According to officers with the [Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department](#), [REDACTED], 23, was behind the wheel of a vehicle as it traveled west along Interstate 465. As Ms. [REDACTED] approached mile-marker 35, between Keystone Avenue and Allisonville Road, around 9:05 p.m., she was hit by [REDACTED], 66, who was driving a Jeep sport-utility vehicle.

The impact forced Ms. [REDACTED]'s car through a metallic partition and down a nearby slope. Mr. [REDACTED] Jeep, meanwhile, caught fire.

Paramedics responded to the scene and transported Mr. [REDACTED] to [Wishard Memorial Hospital](#) for treatment of serious injuries. Ms. [REDACTED] suffered lesser injuries and was also taken to Wishard Memorial Hospital.

According to the [Indiana Criminal Justice Institute](#), property damage or injury resulted in 188,132 accidents in Indiana in 2010.



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Sent: Friday, November 01, 2013 11:22 AM

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Subject: FW: [REDACTED]

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13 Investigates: Recall under fire - 13 WTHR Indianapolis



13 Investigates: Recall under fire

Updated: Nov 01, 2013 10:30 AM EST

By Bob Segall - [bio](#) | [email](#)

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Her first memories following the devastating accident involve waking up from a long coma in hospital bed.

Nurses were hesitant to tell ██████ why she was there.

"They kept saying 'You are OK. You are fine. You are beautiful.' And I think to myself 'Why they saying that?'" she said.

██████ soon began to understand the extent of her injuries – and why nurses were trying to offer comforting words.

"When I saw me in the mirror [I] say 'Where is ██████? Where is ██████? What happened to me?'" she recalls, pausing for a deep breath. As the silence continues, it is clear the South Bend mother is no longer thinking about her hospital stay. She is thinking about today, and she begins crying.

"Why that happen to me? Why?" she asks.

Terrible scars

Police reports, family members and witnesses fill in the details of a horrible crash that erased much of ██████ memory.

On the day of the accident, she was driving to Munster, Ind., to watch her oldest daughter's first dance competition. Her mother was in the passenger seat, and ██████ 6-year-old twins were sitting behind them, strapped into their car seats.

They slowed for a passing funeral procession, but, according to police, the pick-up truck behind them did not.

Witnesses say ██████ 2000 Jeep Cherokee immediately burst into flames.

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But ██████ suffered severe burns on 40 percent of her body. Doctors had to remove her ears, part of her nose, and the tips of all her fingers.

She is now covered with a patchwork of skin grafts and scars, and 20 months after the accident, ██████ still feels a constant sensation of burning.

"Every day I feel on fire," she said. "It's so painful."

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"People are burning to death"

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"As soon as these vehicles went on the road, they started crashing and burning," said Clarence Ditlow, longtime director of the [Center for Auto Safety](#).

The non-profit consumer safety organization says it has tracked more than 475 deaths involving older model Jeeps dating back to 1993.

Among the tragic crashes:

* [REDACTED], 4, died in the backseat of a 1999 Jeep Cherokee March 6, 2012 in Bainbridge, Georgia. His aunt was driving him to tennis lessons when she stopped to turn left and a Dodge Dakota slammed into the back of the SUV. An attorney for [REDACTED] family says his only injury from the impact itself was a broken leg. Witnesses say he was screaming for help from his booster seat.

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But [REDACTED] attorney says many crash victims cannot do that because they're trapped by a raging fire caused by a ruptured gas tank.

"[REDACTED] did not suffer a single broken bone, not one," said attorney Ines Murphy. "She should have opened her door and walked out, but instead you're stuck in a burning car. This car is not safe and needs to be recalled."

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According to Chrysler, the hitch may provide more protection in the back of the vehicle to help better protect the gas tank.

Chrysler said it would begin contacting dealers and customers in July, but four months later, no one has heard anything about it.

WTHR employees who own Jeeps included in the limited recall have not received a recall notice from Chrysler. One of the employees recently visited several local Jeep dealers to see if Chrysler has provided them with recall information.

"They haven't given us any details on it whatsoever," said a service technician at one of the dealerships.

"We have nothing yet," replied a service representative at another dealer.

"It's hard to ask Chrysler about it because they have not even admitted to the problem," said a technician at a third dealership. "So they're certainly not going to have a solution to a problem they haven't even confessed to. We don't even know if there's going to be a recall."

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The driver, [REDACTED] is still recovering from serious burns on his face, arms and hands. [REDACTED] was surprised when 13 Investigates told him about the recall.

"I had no idea. I didn't know there was a problem," he told WTHR.

As customers and dealerships wait to find out when the recall will begin, the bigger question is whether it will do any good. Will a trailer hitch actually reduce injuries and deaths in Jeeps?

"No, it doesn't help. Everyone knows that," Murphy said. "Just look at [REDACTED] crash. [REDACTED] [Jeep] had a trailer hitch."

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"The trailer hitch is a sham," said Ditlow.

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"The trailer hitch cannot, and will not, mitigate the risk of the high energy rear collisions identified in your recall request letter," wrote Matthew Liddane, Chrysler's vice president of vehicle concepts. Chrysler told NHTSA the hitch might "better manage the crash forces" and "incrementally improve the performance" of Jeeps in low-speed crashes.

In other public filings, Chrysler argues that some of the deadly accidents involving Jeeps equipped with trailer hitches involve after-market hitches supplied by other manufacturers.

The [recall](#) Chrysler proposed to NHTSA includes inspection and, if necessary, replacement of after-market trailer hitches already installed on the designated vehicles. Chrysler says such hitches may have sharp edges or other features that could pose a puncture risk to the nearby gas tank on older model Jeeps.

Federal regulators now silent

The questionable ability of trailer hitches to reduce the number of deaths and injuries in rear-impact collisions has prompted consumer advocates to wonder why Chrysler's recall to add trailer hitches is happening at all.

[CAS is urging NHTSA](#) to further investigate Chrysler's proposal and to test the trailer hitch remedy to determine if it has any merit. WTHR has repeatedly called NHTSA to determine if the federal agency will conduct those tests. Over the past four weeks, the agency has not returned any of 13 Investigates' phone calls, nor did it respond to WTHR's request for an on-camera interview.

Sources close to the federal agency tell Eyewitness News NHTSA has not closed its investigation into safety concerns involving gas tanks on older Jeeps, and that future action – possibly another request for a Jeep recall – may be coming in the future.

In the meantime, crash victims like [REDACTED] wonder why NHTSA and Chrysler are not doing more.

"I want them to take responsibility for all this ... and recognize that the car has a problem," she said.

"Chrysler is just playing a game of smoke and mirrors on this and it makes no sense, and even worse people are dying and being severely burned in the meantime," said Ditlow. "Recall these vehicles and do the right thing before more people burn to death."

Safer options available?

While Chrysler's proposed recall is under fire, suggestions have emerged for what could be more effective solutions.

Changing the location of the gas tank is considered the best protection against a tank rupture during a rear-impact collision.

Chrysler has already made that change in all newer model Jeeps. Grand Cherokees produced since model year 2005 and Libertys manufactured since model year 2008 now have fuel tanks placed in front of the vehicles' rear axle.

"Since then, there's not been a single known death due to fire in a rear-impact of the modified vehicles," said Ditlow.

But because of the cost to retrofit older Jeeps with modified gas tanks, Chrysler is not likely to consider that a viable option.

A more cost-effective remedy could be what's referred to as a skid plate, a thick metal shield placed around a gas tank. It's intended to protect the fuel tank from rock damage during off-road excursions but can also provide puncture protection during a crash. Skid plates costs between \$100 and \$300, depending on the model.

Chrysler already offers standard or optional skid plate packages for most of its newer Jeeps, but so far the automaker has not proposed that as a remedy for the government's concern regarding vulnerable fuel tanks on older vehicles.

Links and resources:

[Center for Auto Safety](#)

[Jeep Grand Cherokee recall petition](#)

[NHTSA letter to Chrysler - June 3, 2013](#)

[Chrysler response to recall request - June 18, 2013](#)

[Limited recall of older-model Jeep Grand Cherokees and Libertys](#)

[Chrysler white paper in reponse to NHTSA recall request - June 4, 2013](#)

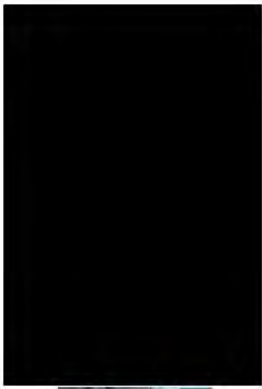
[Center for Auto Safety objects to Chrysler recall plans](#)

[Chrysler letter to NHTSA on recall details - June 18, 2013](#)

[Center for Auto Safety's white paper on concerns about Chrysler recall plans](#)

January 14, 2012 | Porter County, IN | [REDACTED] constantly feels like she's burning, nearly two years after a fiery crash. Her 2000 Jeep Cherokee had a trailer hitch on the back. [REDACTED] went to Washington, D.C. to tell federal regulators her story.

Recall Under Fire: Lives Changed

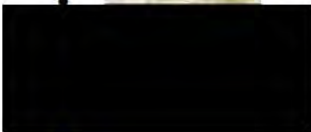


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does not remember her crash.



does not remember her crash.

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- [REDACTED], 4, was riding in this 1999 Jeep Grand Cherokee when he died. Witnesses say it quickly caught fire after being hit in a rear-impact crash last year.
-

From: Michael Brooks
Sent: Friday, November 01, 2013 10:42 AM
To: Clarence Ditlow
Subject: [REDACTED]

[13 Investigates: Recall Under Fire](#) - 11/1/13

Michael Brooks
Staff Attorney
Center for Auto Safety
1825 Connecticut Ave. NW
Suite 330
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 328-7700 x113

DP09-005

12-19-2013

EMAIL TO THE FILE

POLICE REPORT

Howell, Rosa (NHTSA)

From: Clarence Ditlow <cmdiii@autosafety.org>
Sent: Monday, November 04, 2013 10:35 AM
To: Hershman, Larry (NHTSA)
Subject: Here's The Police Report on Indiana
Attachments: ISP Crash Report - Jeep Liberty on 465 - 8-9-20132.pdf; Jeep [REDACTED].jpg



INDIANA OFFICER'S STANDARD CRASH REPORT

Electronic Version

Page 1 of 4

Local ID

Date of Crash 08/19/2013	Day of Week Mon	Actual Local Time 9:00 PM	County MARION	Township WASHINGTON	# Motor Vehicles 2	# Injured 2	# Dead 0	# Commercial Vehicles 0	# Deer 0
Road Crash Occurred On [REDACTED]			Nearest/Intersecting Road/Mile Marker/Interchange [REDACTED]		If not an intersection, number of feet from	Direction	Road Classification INTERSTATE		
Inside Corporate Limits? YES		City/Town or Nearest City/Town INDIANAPOLIS			Property? OTHER	Crash Latitude		Crash Longitude	
Driver #1 [REDACTED]		Driver #2 [REDACTED]		Driver #3		Driver #4			

Primary Cause	Vehicle 1	Vehicle 2	Vehicle 3	Vehicle 4	Primary Cause	Vehicle 1	Vehicle 2	Vehicle 3	Vehicle 4
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>							

Local ID
[REDACTED]**Type of
Crash**

REAR END

Time Notified 9:04 PM	Time Arrived 9:13 PM	Other Location of Investigation AT SCENE ONLY			
Assisting Officer		ID No.	Agency	Investigation Complete? YES	Photos Taken? NO
Assisting Officer		ID No.	Agency	Date of Report 08/19/2013	
Investigating Officer KLINGHAMMER, N		ID No. 8339	Agency ISP INDIANAPOLIS 52	Reviewing Officer 4904	

Narrative

Vehicle one was traveling I-465 westbound at the 34.3 mile marker in the left (number 2) lane and struck vehicle two in the rear. Vehicle one went through the guard rail and rolled over going down the embankment.

Vehicle two was traveling I-465 westbound at the 34.3 mile marker in the middle (number 3) lane and was struck in the rear by vehicle one. Upon impact vehicle two became fully engulfed in flames and was burnt down to the frame. Vehicle two came to rest along the guard rail on the right shoulder.

There were burn marks left in the center (number 3) lane and debris left in the center lane to confirm the lane of impact.

Driver one stated she was going home and then didn't know what happened. Driver two changed her story of events several times during the crash investigation.

Driver two stated he was in the right lane and got hit. Driver two stated he didn't know happened after that. Driver two had burns to his face, right arm and right hand.

Several motorists stopped and confirmed driver one was by herself and no one else was in the vehicle.

UNIT INFORMATION

Page 3 of 4

Local ID

INDIANAPOLIS

IN

Age

Gender

Driver's License #

Lic Type

CDL Class

Lic State

Safety Equipment Used

AIRBAG DEPLOYED (NO RESTRAINT)

Safety Equipment Effective?

YES

Ejection/Trapped

NOT EJECTED OR TRAPPED

EMS No.

2843

Inmed Attn

YES

Driver Injury Status

POSSIBLE

Nature of Most Severe Injury

COMPLAINT OF PAIN

Location of Most Severe Injury

NECK

If Cited?

☒ Infraction☒ Misdemeanor☐ Felony

IC Codes

9-30-5-2

9-21-8-24

9-21-5-1

7.1-5-1-3

Apparent Physical Status

☐ Normal☒ Had Been Drinking☐ Handicapped☐ Ill☐ Asleep/Fatigued☐ Drugs/Medication☐ Unknown

Restrictions

☐ Glasses/Contact Lenses☐ Outside Rearview Mirror☐ Daylight Driving☐ Automatic Transmission☐ Special Controls☐ Employment Only☐ Motorcycle Only☐ To/From Employment☐ Employer's Vehicle Only☐ State-Owned Vehicles☐ PP Chauffeurs Taxi Only☐ Power Steering☐ Special Restrictions☐ Probation DWI☐ Probation HTO☐ None

Test Given

ALCOHOL

Type Given

☒ Blood☐ Urine☐ Breath☐ SFST☐ PBT

Alcohol Results

PBT

.15

Certified

Test

.21

☐ Pending

Drug Results

Veh#

1

Color

SIL

Vehicle Year

2002

Make

TOYOTA

Model

SCLARA

Style

2D

Occupants

1

Lic Year

2014

License #

License State

IN

Axles

2

Speed Limit

55

Insured By

GEICO

Phone Number

8008413000

Vehicle Identification

211CF28P62C

Registered Owner's Name (Last, First, MI)

☐ Same as Driver

INDIANAPOLIS

IN

Towed?

YES

To

CARMEL

By

PADDOCKS

Due to Disabling Damage

YES

Lic State

Lic Year

Registered Owner's Name (Last, First, MI)

☐ Same as Driver

License#

Address (Street, City, State, Zip)

Veh Year

Make

Lic State

Lic Year

Registered Owner's Name (Last, First, MI)

☐ Same as Driver

License#

Address (Street, City, State, Zip)

Veh Year

Make

Lic State

Lic Year

Registered Owner's Name (Last, First, MI)

☐ Same as Driver

Commercial Vehicle: Carrier's Name and Address

HAZMAT Proper Shipping Name:

State DOT#

US DOT#

ICC#

CMV Inspection

If Yes

Gross Vehicle Weight Rating

Cargo Body Type

HAZMAT Placard

HAZMAT Release of Cargo

HAZMAT 4-Digit ID#

Hazard Class #

Vehicle Use

PERSONAL (FARM, COMPANY)

Emergency Run?

Fire?

NO

Vehicle Type

PASSENGER CAR/STATION WAGON

Pre-Crash Vehicle Action

GOING STRAIGHT

Direction of Travel

WEST

Type of Primary/Secondary Roadway

One Way Traffic

☐ One Lane☐ Two Lanes☐ Multi-Lanes (3 or more)

Two Way Traffic

☐ Two Lanes☒ Multi-Lane Divided (3 or more)☐ Multi-Lane Undivided 2 way left turn☐ Multi-Lane Undivided (3 or more)☐ Private Drive☐ Alley

Event Collision With

1. ANOTHER MOTOR VEHICLE 2. GUARDRAIL FACE

3. OVERTURN/ROLLOVER 4. EMBANKMENT

UNIT INFORMATION

902071260

Page 4 of 4

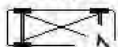
Local ID
201300221197

[Redacted]				Safety Equipment Used LAP + HARNESS	
[Redacted]				Safety Equipment Effective? YES	
INDIANAPOLIS IN [Redacted]				Ejection/Trapped NOT EJECTED OR TRAPPED	
[Redacted]		Age [Redacted]	Gender [Redacted]	EMS No. 0148	Immed Attn YES
[Redacted]		Lic Type OP	CDL Class	Driver Injury Status INCAPACITATING	
[Redacted]		Lic State IN	Nature of Most Severe Injury SEVERE BURN		
Apparent Physical Status <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Normal <input type="checkbox"/> Had Been Drinking <input type="checkbox"/> Handicapped <input type="checkbox"/> Ill <input type="checkbox"/> Asleep/Fatigued <input type="checkbox"/> Drugs/Medication <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown		Restrictions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Glasses/Contact Lenses <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outside Rearview Mirror <input type="checkbox"/> Daylight Driving <input type="checkbox"/> Automatic Transmission <input type="checkbox"/> Special Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Only <input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycle Only <input type="checkbox"/> To/From Employment		Location of Most Severe Injury SHOULDER/UPPER ARM	
Test Given NONE		Type Given <input type="checkbox"/> Blood <input type="checkbox"/> Urine <input type="checkbox"/> Breath <input type="checkbox"/> SFST <input type="checkbox"/> PBT		If Cited? <input type="checkbox"/> Infraction <input type="checkbox"/> Misdemeanor <input type="checkbox"/> Felony	
Alcohol Results PBT		Certified Test <input type="checkbox"/> Pending		Drug Results	
Veh# 2	Color BLUE	Vehicle Year 2002	Make Jeep (post 1988)	Model LIBERTY	Style 4W
# Occupants 1	Lic Year 2014	License # UNKNOWN	License State IN		
# Axles 2	Speed Limit 55	Insured By STATE FARM	Phone Number 0000000000		
Vehicle Identification# UNKNOWN					
Registered Owner's Name (Last, First, MI) [Redacted] <input type="checkbox"/> Same as Driver					
INDIANAPOLIS IN [Redacted]					
Towed? YES		To CARMEL	By PADDOCKS		Due to Disabling Damage YES
License#		Address (Street, City, State, Zip)			
Veh Year		Make			
License#		Address (Street, City, State, Zip)			
Veh Year		Make			
License#		Address (Street, City, State, Zip)			
Veh Year		Make			
Commercial Vehicle: Carrier's Name and Address					
HAZMAT Proper Shipping Name:					
State DOT#					
US DOT#		ICC#		CMV Inspection If Yes	
Gross Vehicle Weight Rating		Cargo Body Type			
HAZMAT Placard		HAZMAT Release of Cargo		HAZMAT 4-Digit ID#	
				Hazard Class #	
Safety Equipment Used LAP + HARNESS					
Safety Equipment Effective? YES					
Ejection/Trapped NOT EJECTED OR TRAPPED					
EMS No. 0148					
Immed Attn YES					
Driver Injury Status INCAPACITATING					
Nature of Most Severe Injury SEVERE BURN					
Location of Most Severe Injury SHOULDER/UPPER ARM					
If Cited? <input type="checkbox"/> Infraction <input type="checkbox"/> Misdemeanor <input type="checkbox"/> Felony					
Initial Impact Area <input type="checkbox"/> Undercarriage <input type="checkbox"/> Trailer <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown					
Areas Damaged (Multiples) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undercarriage <input type="checkbox"/> Trailer <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown					
Vehicle Use PERSONAL (FARM, COMPANY)					
Emergency Run? YES					
Fire? YES					
Vehicle Type SPORT UTILITY VEHICLE					
Pre-Crash Vehicle Action GOING STRAIGHT					
Direction of Travel WEST					
Type of Primary/Secondary Roadway One Way Traffic <input type="checkbox"/> One Lane <input type="checkbox"/> Two Lanes <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-Lanes (3 or more)					
Two Way Traffic <input type="checkbox"/> Two Lanes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multi-Lane Divided (3 or more) <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-Lane Undivided 2 way left turn <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-Lane Undivided (3 or more)					
Event Collision With 1. ANOTHER MOTOR VEHICLE 2. GUARDRAIL FACE					

Unit 1



Unit 1



Unit 1

Unit 1

Indiana State Police

201300221197

08-19-2013

NOT TO SCALE



Unit 2

Unit 2

Unit 2

Unit 1

Unit 1

Unit 2

I-465 WB 34.3 MM Number 5 lane

Number 4 lane

Number 3 lane

Number 2 lane

Number 1 lane

