



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: EA 11-010
Prompted by: Consumer complaints and PE10-022
Date Opened: 09/06/2011
Investigator: Ali Motamedamin **Reviewer:** Scott Yon
Approver: Frank Borris
Subject: Loss of Headlight Illumination

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: CHRYSLER GROUP LLC
Products: Model Year (MY) 2005 Chrysler Minivans
Population: 622,817

Problem Description: Complainants allege that the headlights extinguish (go out) while driving.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	146	1,395	1,541
Crashes/Fires:	0	2	2
Injury Incidents:	0	1	1
Number of Injuries:	0	1	1
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	14,208	14,208

*Description of Other: Warranty claims that may relate to the alleged defect.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: Open this Engineering Analysis.

Summary:

To date, ODI has interviewed several complainants who confirmed that the headlights fully extinguish, and remain extinguished, on an intermittent basis. In most cases this occurred while the vehicle was in motion. The occurrences do not show a repeatable pattern, and the problem occurs at a low frequency, typically one or more weeks between failures. For this reason most complainants have not attempted diagnosis or repair of the problem, so the cause is unknown, and the problem continues to occur. In the cases where repairs have been attempted, which consisted mainly of headlight switch and body control module replacements, mixed success is reported.

In interviews complainants advised ODI that they can usually toggle the headlight switch, or turn on the high beams by actuating the column stalk (pulling it upward), when the headlights unexpectedly turn off. Complainants report that toggling the switch is usually effective, and the high beams have always been available when the column is used. During the course of the interviews ODI was able to obtain a few suspect headlamp switches for further evaluation. No verifiable crashes or injuries have been identified in the vehicle owner complaints (VOQs).

Chrysler notes that its complaints also include allegations of dimming or flickering of the headlights in addition to loss of headlamps, and that their analysis of available data indicates a declining trend occurring in the field. Chrysler data reports two alleged crash incidents; one where a consumers vehicle lost forward lighting and struck a deer, and one where a consumer alleged their lighting stopped working, causing them to depart the roadway and drive into a ditch. A minor injury is alleged in this second incident. Both incidents occurred several years ago, and neither allegation has been confirmed by ODI.

ODI is opening this investigation to continue its analysis of the alleged defect and its consequences, which will include

additional analysis of consumer reports, their frequency and trend, and Chrysler's technical information for the headlight system and its components. Additionally testing will be conducted to evaluate possible root cause(s) of the alleged defect, and will include analysis of suspect components collected from the field, and/or assessment of subject vehicles that have reportedly experienced the condition.