



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 11-012
Date Opened: 04/15/2011
Investigator: Nate Seymour
Approver: Frank Borris
Subject: Fontaine Ultra LT 5th Wheel False Latch
Reviewer: Bruce York-B

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: FREIGHTLINER LLC
Products: 2011 Freightliner Tractors
Population: 2,000 (Estimated)
Problem Description: Vehicles equipped with a Fontaine Ultra LT 5th wheel may not latch securely.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	0	TBD	0
Crashes/Fires:	1	TBD	1
Injury Incidents:	0	TBD	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	TBD	0
Other*:	1	TBD	TBD

***Description of Other:** TSB

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: This Preliminary Evaluation (PE) has been opened.

Summary:

ODI became aware of the potential false latch condition in Fontaine's Ultra LT 5th Wheels from Fontaine's TSB (10036732) submission. ODI contacted Fontaine requesting fleet contact information in order to contact the end users. Communications with the fleets revealed that several trailers had de-coupled and in one case occurred while entering the roadway.

The TSB identifies a product enhancement which replaces the lock bar with a modified component. The driver of a vehicle with the unmodified component may believe that the trailer is securely hitched after a "pull test" has been successfully completed. However if the release handle is not fully seated in the locked position the 5th wheel jaws may release the king pin at anytime. The modified component is designed such that a partially latched 5th wheel will release during a pull test as is normally expected.

ODI has opened a PE to further evaluate the safety risk.