



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 14-002
Date Opened: 01/30/2014
Investigator: Peter Kivett
Approver: Frank Borris
Subject: Front spindle failure

Date Closed: 12/23/2014
Reviewer: Bruce York-B

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: AMERICAN LAFRANCE LLC
Products: 2008 American Lafrance Eagle
Population: 100

Problem Description: Front spindle fracture causing a complete wheel separation.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

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

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: This Preliminary Evaluation is closed

Summary:

On January 30th 2014 the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) opened PE14-002 based on Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ) No. 10554304 alleging that the front wheel completely separated on a model year 2008 American LaFrance Eagle aerial-ladder fire truck.

During this investigation, ODI sent American LaFrance an Information Request (IR) letter seeking further information. After sending the IR, ODI learned that under direction from its owner Patriarch Partners LLC, American LaFrance had ceased operation and closed its manufacturing facilities. Subsequent communications with Patriarch Partners revealed that the records necessary to respond to ODI's IR could not be obtained. As a result of this information not being available, ODI was not able to conduct a complete investigation or locate the owners of existing vehicles. In an effort to notify owners of the vehicles about the potential safety issue, ODI released a consumer alert. This alert was distributed to the Emergency Responder community via the firstresponder.gov web site. Copies of both the alert and website where it was published can be found in the public file for this investigation. Information will continue to be collected from any operators who contact ODI who will be advised of the risks and how best to prevent future failures.

Due to the inability to locate production, owner, and failure or warranty data, ODI is closing this Preliminary Evaluation. A safety-related defect trend has not been identified at this time and further use of agency resources does not appear to be warranted. The closing of this investigation does not constitute a finding by NHTSA that no safety-related defect exists. The agency reserves the right to take further action if additional data becomes available.



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- Consumer Alert -

American LaFrance Eagle Aerial-Ladder Fire Truck

On January 30, 2014, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) opened an investigation (PE14-002) into allegations of front spindle fractures and resulting wheel separations on model year 2008 American LaFrance Eagle aerial-ladder fire trucks.

During the course of this investigation, NHTSA sent American LaFrance an Information Request (IR) letter requesting information related to the alleged failures. The response to the IR letter would normally provide NHTSA with details related to complaints, warranty, population and affected operators along with other pertinent information necessary to evaluate the potential safety defect. After mailing the IR letter, NHTSA learned that American LaFrance had ceased operation and closed its manufacturing facilities. Subsequent communications with Patriarch Partners, which owns a significant equity interest in the now defunct American LaFrance, revealed that the records necessary to respond to the IR letter could not be obtained. As a result, NHTSA has not been able to complete its investigation or determine which vehicles might be at risk of a spindle failure.

NHTSA is concerned that this issue may represent a risk to motor vehicle safety. If a failure occurs the potential for a crash and resulting injury is high. Because NHTSA is unable to obtain owner information for the subject vehicles, we are reaching out to the fire service directly to alert all owners and operators of these vehicles of the potential hazard.

Shown below are pictures of a failed part as well as a fire truck impacted by a failure. Please make sure you immediately inspect your vehicles and add the inspection of the front spindles into your regular preventive maintenance (PM) schedules. Check for cracks along the radius of the hub as well as the spindle. It is NHTSA's belief that there may have been cracks in the spindle/hub that propagated prior to complete failure.

While your American LaFrance fire truck may not currently have an issue, your diligence in inspecting and maintaining the spindle frequently may prevent a wheel separation while driving.

Please contact NHTSA if during your inspection you find cracks within the spindle/hub assembly or if you discover any other safety issue on these vehicles. If you would like additional information or you own one of these vehicles and would like to file a complaint with NHTSA, please call Peter Kivett at 202-366-6178.



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1200 New Jersey Avenue SE.
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