



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: AQ 14-003
Prompted by:
Date Opened: 10/20/2014
Investigator: Robert Garris **Reviewer:** Jennifer Timian
Approver: Frank Borris
Subject: Chrysler's execution of 13V-528 & 529

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: Chrysler Group LLC
Products: Certain 2003-2012 Dodge RAM 1500, 2500, and 3500
Population: 971,721
Problem Description: Slow execution of recall campaigns, coupled with poor communications with the agency over potential recall remedy part problems.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: Open an Audit Query (AQ).

Summary:

On November 6, 2013, Chrysler notified NHTSA and submitted two Defect Information Reports (Part 573 reports) to address a defect in the left tie rod assembly of various Dodge Ram vehicles. Specifically, potential fracturing of the left tie rod ball stud that could induce a loss of steering control. The recall campaign, assigned recall number 13V-528, addresses 706,664 model year (MY) 2003-2008 Dodge RAM 2500 4x4 and 3500 4x4, MY 2007-2008 Dodge RAM 3500 4x2 Cab Chassis and MY 2006-2008 Dodge RAM 1500 Mega Cab 4x4. The second recall campaign, assigned recall number 13V-529, addresses 265,057 MY 2008-2012 RAM 2500 4X4 and 3500 4X4 trucks, MY 2008-2012 Dodge RAM 3500 4x2 Cab Chassis, and MY 2008 Dodge RAM 1500 Mega Cab 4x4.

Safety recalls 13V-528 and 13V-529 were the result, in part, of concerns the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) had raised with Chrysler over the remedy effectiveness of an earlier recall campaign, safety recall 11V-350. ODI reviewed the remedy instructions to dealers provided in Chrysler's technical service bulletin (TSB) and discussed with Chrysler issues related to the pragmatic application of the remedy, including concerns about the difficulty of the repair procedure and application of by independent repair shops that may have limited access to information or tooling needed to perform the recall repairs correctly. During the course of ODI's initial inquiries, Chrysler decided to expand the scope of vehicles addressed by the 11V-350 recall campaign, and to change the recall remedy to replacement of the left tie rod assembly with a left tie rod assembly of a different design.

Chrysler notified the affected owners of vehicles in December 2013, and said in its letter that they could start scheduling service appointments to have their vehicles remedied beginning January 6, 2014. The agency has received hundreds of complaints from owners reporting frustrations with obtaining service appointments and having their vehicles remedied under the safety recall. Many owners have complained of dealers informing them it would be many months before the dealership could secure a replacement part for their vehicle. During the initial months of the recalls' launch, ODI contacted Chrysler to confirm there were not any recall administrative issues or unusual remedy parts restrictions, and was informed there were not, and that dealers could order and receive parts through Chrysler's parts division, Mopar. As the complaints progressed, ODI received information from dealers reflecting that severe parts restriction were in place and, eventually, received a copy of a notification Mopar issued instructing dealers to immediately return the replacement tie rod assemblies for quality verification. ODI contacted Chrysler immediately upon receipt of the Mopar communication and Chrysler confirmed that, in fact, the recall campaigns had been suspended while it investigated quality concerns with the parts. Eventually, the campaigns resumed.

NHTSA is opening this audit query in order to better understand and evaluate Chrysler's process(es) for timely and efficient execution of its safety recall campaigns, including its oversight and management of its parts division Mopar, and to identify and help rectify any issues or concerns that resulted in the various miscommunications and delays associated with safety recalls 13V-528 and 13V-529.

The VOQs associated with this investigation are listed in attachment 1 through 3.

MY2007-2012 Dodge RAM 3500 4x2

MY 2006-2008 Dodge RAM 1500 Mega Cab 4x4

Potential fracturing of the left tie rod ball stud that could induce a loss of steering control.

Slow execution of recall campaign 13V-528 and 13V-529, coupled with poor communications with the agency over potential recall remedy part problems

The VOQs associated with the opening of this investigation are: (01/06/2014 – 10/06/2014)

13V-529: (Qty.: 777)

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MY2007-2012 Dodge RAM 3500 4x2

MY 2006-2008 Dodge RAM 1500 Mega Cab 4x4

Potential fracturing of the left tie rod ball stud that could induce a loss of steering control.

Slow execution of recall campaign 13V-528 and 13V-529, coupled with poor communications with the agency over potential recall remedy part problems

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MY2007-2012 Dodge RAM 3500 4x2

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13V-528: (Qty.: 235)

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