U.S. Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

ODI RESUME

OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

NHTSA

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Investigation: PE 15-034
Date Opened: 10/16/2015
Investigator: Nate Seymour
Reviewer: Bruce York-B
Approver: Otto Matheke
Subject: Hitch Failure

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: BEAR TRAILER MANUFACTURING INC.
Products: 2010 Bear Trailer Manufacturing
Population: 1,000 (Estimated)

Problem Description: The Trail Guard trailer hitch may fail increasing the risk of a vehicle crash.

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: A Preliminary Evaluation (PE) has been opened.

Summary:

The Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) opened this Preliminary Evaluation (PE) based on an owner report and the lack of required TREAD act reporting from Bear Trailer MFG. The Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ) reported a crack in the trailer tongue. This is a critical component for the safe operation of any trailer.

The subject component of this investigation is the Trail Guard tongue. This is a removable tongue which serves two purposes. Removal of the tongue shortens the trailer, reducing the amount of storage space required and also prevents trailer theft. With the tongue and coupler removed it is not possible to connect a tow vehicle to the trailer or operate the trailer's electrical system.

ODI attempted to review data that should have been received from Bear (as required by 49 CFR 579) to further asses if a defect related to the Trail Guard tongue exists. ODI found that this data set was incomplete and not up to date.

ODI has opened this investigation to determine the scope and severity of the alleged defect.

The ODI reports cited above can be reviewed at:
http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/owners/SearchNHTSAID under the following complaint identification numbers: 10759570