



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration**

# ODI RESUME

**Investigation:** PE 18-016  
**Date Opened:** 12/17/2018  
**Investigator:** Joseph Oxenham                      **Reviewer:** Scott Yon  
**Approver:** Stephen Ridella  
**Subject:** Steering loss due to linkage separation

## MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

**Manufacturer:** Chrysler (FCA US LLC)  
**Products:** Model year 2015 -2016 Ram 2500 Pickup Truck  
**Population:** 200,000 (Estimated)  
**Problem Description:** The steering linkage (drag link) that connects the steering box to the front wheels may separate at the adjustment device resulting in loss of steering.

## FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
<b>Complaints:</b>	2	TBD	TBD
<b>Crashes/Fires:</b>	1	TBD	TBD
<b>Injury Incidents:</b>	1	TBD	TBD
<b>Number of Injuries:</b>	1	TBD	TBD
<b>Fatality Incidents:</b>	0	TBD	TBD
<b>Number of Fatalities:</b>	0	TBD	TBD

## ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

**Action:** Open a Preliminary Evaluation.

### Summary:

The Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) has identified two complaints alleging the steering system failed on model year (MY) 2015 and 2016 Ram 2500s. Both vehicles were equipped with four wheel drive, and both failures occurred while the vehicle was in operation. The failures were allegedly due to the separation of the drag link, a steering linkage that connects between the right front steering knuckle and the pitman arm on the steering box output shaft. The separation occurred at a threaded coupler within the drag link intended to be used for adjusting the length of the linkage during maintenance (alignment) of the steering system. Once separation occurs, turning the steering wheel has no effect, and there is no way for the driver to control or maintain the direction of the vehicle.

In one report, the complainant alleges the linkage separated while the vehicle was negotiating a left hand curve on a highway traveling at a speed of 65 to 70 MPH. As a result the vehicle departed the right side of the roadway and was brought to a stop in an unimproved shoulder area. An injury is alleged due to the vehicle encountering rough surfaces (ditches) on the shoulder. The second report involved a separation that, based on complainant interview occurred while the vehicle was being driven (reversed) out of a parking space. The drag link and coupler assembly had to be replaced to repair both vehicles.

ODI is opening this investigation to evaluate the cause, consequence, scope and frequency of the alleged defect (drag link separation) in the subject Ram vehicles.

The reports cited above can be reviewed at NHTSA.gov under the following reference numbers: 11064516, 11083519 (which is also reported under 11053917).