



U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE19014
Prompted By: VOQ Review
Date Opened: 09/09/2019 **Date:** 02/25/2026
Closed:
Investigator: Iulian Gugiu **Reviewer:** Bruce York
Approver: Tanya Topka
Subject: Active Head Rest Inadvertent Deployment

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: Chrysler (FCA US, LLC)
Products: Chrysler: 2011-2014 200, 2011 Grand Voyager, 2010-2016 Town & Country | Dodge: 2010-2014 Avenger, 2010-2012 Caliber, 2013-2015 C/V, 2011-2020 Durango, 2010-2020 Grand Caravan, 2010-2019 Journey, 2010-2011 Nitro, 2012 Ram, 2010 Sebring | Jeep: 2010-2017 Compass, 2011-2020 Grand Cherokee, 2010-2012 Liberty, 2010-2017 Patriot
Population: 7,365,269

Problem Description: The driver and/or passenger front seat Active Head Rest inadvertently deploys without a rear impact event.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	EWR D&I	Other	Total	EWR Field Reports
All Incidents:	2,561	4,279	0	1,930	8,770	0
Crashes/Fires:	5	6	0	0	11	0
Injury Incidents:	349	426	0	0	751	0
Number of Injuries:	352	427	0	0	753	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of Fatalities:	0	0	0	0	0	0

Description of Other:
Warranty Claims

ACTION/SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: This Preliminary Evaluation (PE) is closed with a manufacturer ten-year extended warranty.

Summary:

The Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) opened PE19014 on September 9, 2019, to investigate 128 consumer complaints alleging that the Active Head Rest (AHR) inadvertently deployed without the occurrence of a crash or other rear impact event in model year (MY) 2014 Jeep Grand Cherokee and Dodge Durango vehicles. When ODI opened the investigation, ODI was aware of thirteen alleged injuries. A small number of Early Warning Reports identified driver and/or passenger front seat AHR inadvertent deployments without a rear impact event. Reported safety consequences resulting from the AHR deployments include concussions, headaches, soft tissue injuries, disorientation, nausea, vomiting and/or loss of vehicle control as a result of being surprised and distracted by being struck in the head by the inadvertent AHR deployment.

On September 24, 2019, ODI sent an Information Request (IR) letter to Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA). ODI requested certain detailed information from FCA related to the following subject vehicles: MY 2010-2014 Dodge Avenger 200, MY 2010-2014 Dodge Calber, MY 2010-2014 Chrysler Sebring, MY 2013-2015 Ram Tradesman, MY 2012 Ram Van, MY 2010-2019 Dodge Grand Caravan, MY 2010-2016 Chrysler Town and Country, MY 2010-2017 Jeep Compass, MY 2011-2020 Dodge Durango, MY 2011-2020 Jeep Grand Cherokee, MY 2010-2019 Dodge Journey, MY 2010-2012 Jeep Liberty, MY 2010-2011 Jeep Nitro, and MY 2010-2011 Jeep Patriot vehicles. On December 2, 2019, ODI received a response from FCA that included vehicle production data, consumer complaints, field reports, warranty claims, manufacturer actions, production changes, and other data related to the alleged defect from the start of production (2010) through September 24, 2019. On January 27, 2020, ODI received an update to the December 2, 2019, IR response from FCA. On September 22, 2020, ODI requested additional subject vehicle AHR information from FCA. ODI received FCA's response on October 21, 2020. ODI subsequently received an update to FCA's October 21, 2020, response on February 16, 2021. During the investigation, ODI requested updates to certain IR questions on two occasions. FCA provided updates to question #2 on March 5, 2021, and questions #2 and #5 on May 26, 2023.

FCA's IR response data identified approximately 7.5 million subject vehicles (with approximately 15 million AHR assemblies). Due to the large number of vehicles and failure reports, ODI focused its analysis on the FCA vehicle model with the highest failure rate to represent the worst-case scenario. For this purpose, ODI focused on MY 2012-2015 Jeep Grand Cherokee vehicles for its analysis. This population includes 710,890 vehicles that FCA manufactured between August 19, 2011, and August 8, 2015. ODI identified 2,839 alleged AHR failures within this limited population. ODI identified 263 alleged injuries that were caused by AHR failures in MY 2012-2015 Grand Cherokees vehicles. Of these alleged injuries, ODI categorized them as eighty-two (82) soft tissue (neck/whiplash, bruise) injuries, four (4) concussions, fifty-nine (59) headaches, and one hundred eighteen (118) without a specific injury description. Although complainants have alleged injuries, ODI has been unable to obtain evidence to substantiate or validate any injuries where medical treatment was required. Consumer outreach was conducted by ODI, where sixty-three (63) FCA complainants with alleged injuries were contacted. Twelve of the sixty-three FCA consumers responded and were interviewed by ODI. ODI requested medical records, however, only one response was provided. Attorneys representing the responding complainant provided a synopsis that indicated they had experienced prior neck-related injuries dating to the mid-1990s. ODI also contacted one hundred (100) consumers who submitted Vehicle Owner Questionnaires (VOQ) in an attempt to validate alleged injuries. Despite the efforts of ODI, the office has been unsuccessful at obtaining substantive documentation/evidence supporting complaints that allege serious injuries (where pre-existing medical conditions did not already exist).

In addition to the low severity of alleged injuries caused by AHR deployments, there have been eleven alleged crashes and two alleged lane departures within the entire subject vehicle population that has been in the field up to sixteen years (with over 8,500 AHR inadvertent deployments). ODI was not able to validate that the alleged crashes were the result of inadvertent head rest deployments, and the crashes were minor in nature.

ODI has conducted a thorough investigation of the alleged safety defect and with up to sixteen years of exposure for some vehicles and over 8,500 inadvertent AHR deployments, no serious crashes or injuries could be validated in the sub-population of focus. The lack of serious injuries validated by ODI with such large period of field exposure is consistent with the work done by NHTSA's Human Injury Research Division and the Biodynamic Research Corporation, which support that an inadvertent AHR deployment is not likely to cause serious injury. In addition to the low risk of injury, FCA released an extended warranty program that covers inadvertent AHR deployment for ten years / unlimited mileage from the vehicle's in-service date.

PE19014 is closed with the FCA extended warranty program. The closing of this investigation does not constitute a finding by NHTSA that a safety-related defect does not exist, and the Agency reserves the right to take additional action if warranted by new circumstances.

To review a complete closing summary, please see the attached closing report.

To review the ODI reports cited in the Closing Resume ODI Report Identification Number document, go to [NHTSA.gov](https://www.nhtsa.gov).