



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 19-007
Date Opened: 06/18/2019
Investigator: Ryan Rahimpour
Approver: Stephen Ridella
Subject: Rear Leaf Spring Fractures
Reviewer: Bruce York-B

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: FREIGHTLINER LLC, Daimler Trucks North America LLC
Products: 2008-2018 Thomas Built School Buses
Population: 69,724 (Estimated)
Problem Description: Rear leaf spring fragment detachments can create a road hazard to operators and occupants of other vehicles, and can result in a crash or personal injury without warning.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	0	TBD	TBD
Crashes/Fires:	0	TBD	TBD
Injury Incidents:	0	TBD	TBD
Number of Injuries:	0	TBD	TBD
Fatality Incidents:	0	TBD	TBD
Number of Fatalities:	0	TBD	TBD
Other*:	0	Confidential	Confidential

*Description of Other: 2018-Quarter 4 DTNA Field Reports.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: Open a Preliminary Evaluation (PE).

Summary:

NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) has identified field reports in Daimler Truck North America's (DTNA) 2018-4th quarter Early Warning Reporting (EWR) data describing cracked rear leaf-style suspension springs in Thomas Built school buses. ODI reached out to 3 municipal school bus fleets operating subject vehicles who described similar failures where a fractured piece of leaf spring separated from the vehicle while driving. ODI also contacted a major nationwide school bus transportation service provider who also identified numerous potential failures.

A fractured piece of leaf spring that detaches from a moving school bus could potentially strike a pedestrian or a following vehicle.

ODI is opening this investigation to evaluate the cause, consequence, scope and frequency of the alleged defect (item detachment) in the subject Thomas Built school buses.