U.S. Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

ODI RESUME

OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

NHTSA

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Investigation: PE 20-017
Date Opened: 10/09/2020
Investigator: Xiaoming Tan **Reviewer:** Bruce York-B
Approver: Stephen Ridella
Subject: Steering Arm May Detach From the Vehicle

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: DEXTER AXLE
Products: 2019-2020 Dexter Smart-Steer 2.0 Axles
Population: 4,043 (Estimated)

Problem Description: The mounting bolts attaching the steering arm to Smart-Steer 2.0 axles may fail resulting in steering components detaching and falling onto the roadway.

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*:	1	Confidential	Confidential

***Description of Other:** TSB #10168802, Manufacturer claims

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: Open this Preliminary Evaluation (PE)

Summary:

In December 2019, the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) received a Technical Service Bulletin (TSB #10168802) submitted by Dexter Axles that describes a potential defect involving bolts that attach steering arms to their Smart-Steer 2.0 axles. The Smart-Steer 2.0 axles are designed and built with castering wheel ends that are connected with a tie rod through steering arms at each end. The bolts that attach the steering arms to the axles can fail, allowing the tie rod to separate from the axle at one end. Following receipt of the TSB, ODI gathered additional information from claimants, including pictures of bolt failures on their Smart-Steer axles. In one case, pictures showed a large steering arm assembly had detached from the tie rod and likely had fallen onto the roadway.

ODI has identified an increasing trend in claims that allege steering arm mounting bolt failures on Dexter Smart-Steer 2.0 axles.

ODI has opened a Preliminary Evaluation to assess the scope, frequency, and severity of the alleged defect.

The ODI report cited above can be reviewed at:
http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/owners/SearchNHTSAID
using the following identification number: 10168802