



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 23-004
Date Opened: 03/17/2023
Investigator: Nate Seymour
Approver: Stephen Ridella
Subject: Blue Bird Draglink Failures
Reviewer: Joshua Neff

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: Blue Bird Body Company
Products: 2016-2020 Vision school buses
Population: 36,000 (Estimated)
Problem Description: The draglink may separate from the steering knuckle resulting in a loss of directional control.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	2	TBD	TBD
Crashes/Fires:	1	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: EWR data

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: A Preliminary Evaluation has been opened.

Summary:

The Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) has opened this Preliminary Evaluation on model year 2016-2020 Blue Bird Vision school buses to assess allegations of draglink separation. A draglink separation may result in the loss of steering.

ODI became aware of a single bus crash through social media reports. ODI contacted the Transportation Director at the rural school district and learned that another Blue Bird bus had experienced a similar failure one week after the initial crash. Both buses experienced a separation of the draglink ball joint at the steering arm. These two failures occurred despite recent inspections by multiple qualified entities.

ODI visited the school district and met with the Transportation Director and bus owners. The Pennsylvania State Police Motor Carrier Safety Assurance Program (PA MCSAP) assisted ODI to inspect buses at several neighboring school districts. One additional bus with a similar concern was identified during these inspections.

This Preliminary Evaluation has been opened to evaluate the issue and determine whether the alleged defect creates an unreasonable risk to motor vehicle safety.