



NEWMAR QUALITY: A WAY OF LIFE.

January 26, 2004

04V-037 ① of ⑥

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DEFECT INVESTIGATION

VIA FACSIMILE (202/366-7882)
& CERTIFIED MAIL

Mr. Kenneth N. Weinstein
Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: 1998 – 2000 Newmar Dutch Star (on Spartan Chassis)
1997 – 2000 Newmar Dutch Star (on Freightliner Chassis)
2001 – 2002 Newmar Kountry Star (on Freightliner Chassis)

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

This information report is submitted by Newmar Corporation for the purpose of advising the agency that Newmar will conduct a voluntary recall of the above-referenced motor homes equipped with Michelin 255/80R22.5 XRV tires. Newmar has experienced a relatively high warranty claims rate with respect to the front tires on these vehicles which appears to be due to overloading, underinflation, or a combination thereof. As part of this campaign, Newmar will offer to replace the front tires on all of the affected vehicles with new Michelin 275/70R22.5 XZA1 tires free of charge. These tires will provide a greater carrying capacity.

Newmar provides the following information regarding this campaign:

1. Identification Of Vehicles

<u>Years</u>	<u>Model</u>
1998 – 2000	Dutch Star (on Spartan Chassis)
1997 – 2000	Dutch Star (on Freightliner Chassis)
2001 – 2002	Kountry Star (on Freightliner Chassis)

2. Total Number Of Vehicles Involved

A total of 3,589 units have been delivered to customers.

3. Percentage of Vehicles Estimated To Be Affected

Due to the variety of configurations (e.g., options, etc.), operating conditions, and owner maintenance, Newmar is unable to estimate how many of the subject vehicles are affected. However, Newmar will replace the front tires on all of the subject vehicles.

4. Description of the Condition

Newmar has not identified a defect in these vehicles or the tires. Newmar has decided that there have been a relatively high number of front tire failures on these vehicles which appear to be a result of overloading and/or underinflation. Literature provided with these vehicles warns owners against both of these conditions. When overloading or underinflation occurs, the steel carcass ply reinforcement cords can fatigue, and the tire sidewall can rupture without warning due to overdeflection. Newmar is not aware of any accidents, injuries or deaths involving such failures.

5. Chronology of Principal Events Leading to this Determination

Newmar recently identified the overload/underinflation issue as a result of an internal review of warranty claims. On December 18, 2003, representatives of Newmar and Michelin met with NHTSA officials, at Newmar's request, to discuss this matter. Following that meeting, Newmar has been in further contact with the NHTSA staff to resolve this matter on a basis which is satisfactory to the agency.

6. Remedy Program

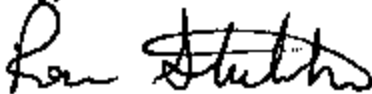
Newmar will implement a replacement campaign to replace and install at no charge the front tires on the affected vehicles with new Michelin 275/70R22.5 XZA1 tires. Newmar will contact all vehicle owners using registration data to advise them of this campaign, and will provide instructions for obtaining replacement tires. Replacement tires are currently available. Newmar will issue new certification tags documenting the new front tires installation and simultaneously increasing the rear tire inflation pressures to 105 psi.

7. Customer Notice Letter

Draft copies of Newmar's customer notification letters are attached hereto. Separate letters will be used depending upon whether the vehicle is built on a Spartan chassis or Freightliner chassis. Newmar is prepared to proceed with its customer notification program immediately.

Please advise the undersigned of the agency's approval of the customer notification letters.

Sincerely,



Ron Stichter
Director of Engineering
NEWMAR CORPORATION



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RECALL NOTICE

04V-037 ③ of ⑥

January 26, 2004

Name
Address
City, State ZipCode

VIN #
Coach #

Dear Newmar Customer:

Newmar Corporation has decided that a safety issue exists in 1998 through 2000 Dutch Star motorhomes, built on a Spartan chassis. Our records indicate that your motorhome is affected by this recall. The purpose of this recall is to replace the front tires with tires that have a higher carrying capacity.

Subject Vehicles. 1998 through 2000 Dutch Star, built on Spartan Chassis and equipped with Michelin 255/80R22.5 XRV tires.

Safety Issue. Newmar has learned of instances of carcass ply fatigue tire failures occurring which appear to be a result of vehicle overloading, tire underinflation, or a combination of the two, with respect to the subject vehicles. When these vehicles are overloaded or tires underinflated, the steel carcass ply reinforcement cords in the tires can fatigue, and the tire sidewall can rupture without warning due to overdeflection. Underinflation/overloading can cause permanent damage to tires.

Risk. This condition could result in a sudden failure of a front tire without prior warning, potentially resulting in loss of control of the motorhome.

Vehicle Owner Precautions. Until the tires are replaced,

- a. Do not exceed gross vehicle weight ratings or gross axle weight ratings.
- b. Inspect your front tires for any signs of unusual wear or damage. Do not drive on tires that appear to be excessively worn or damaged.
- c. Be sure to maintain air pressure in the front tires at the maximum rating pressure of 105 psi.

- d. It is critical that you:
- Know your tire and axle ratings
 - Know your actual per corner weights
 - Maintain proper tire pressures at all times
 - Check your tire pressure on a regular basis

Remedy. Newmar will replace your front tires with Michelin 275/70R22.5 XZA1 tires, which provide a greater carrying capacity. Newmar offers this replacement, including installation, at no cost. Please call toll free (800) 867-6478 to locate a participating servicing location. After the new tires have been installed (this service should take less than two hours), it is important that you do not rotate tires front to rear. Newmar will issue you a new certification tag documenting the new front tires installation and simultaneously increasing the rear tire inflation pressures to 105 psi.

Problems or Questions. If you experience any problems obtaining replacement tires, please contact Newmar's toll free customer service at (800) 867-6478 for assistance. If you believe Newmar has failed or is unable to remedy without charge the condition outlined above within a reasonable time, you may submit a complaint to the Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590 or call the toll free auto safety hotline at 888-327-4236.

Newmar apologizes for any inconvenience this may cause, but please understand that we are committed to your satisfaction and safety.

Sincerely,

NEWMAR CORPORATION



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RECALL NOTICE

04V-037 ⑤ of ⑥

January 26, 2004

Name
Address
City, State ZipCode

VIN #
Coach #

Dear Newmar Customer:

Newmar Corporation has decided that a safety issue exists in 1997 through 2000 Dutch Star motorhomes and 2001 through 2002 Kountry Star motorhomes, built on a Freightliner chassis. Our records indicate that your motorhome is affected by this recall. The purpose of this recall is to replace the front tires with tires that have a higher carrying capacity.

Subject Vehicles. 1997 through 2000 Dutch Star, and 2001 and 2002 Kountry Star, built on Freightliner Chassis and equipped with Michelin 255/80R22.5 XRV tires.

Safety Issue. Newmar has learned of instances of carcass ply fatigue tire failures occurring which appear to be a result of vehicle overloading, tire underinflation, or a combination of the two, with respect to the subject vehicles. When these vehicles are overloaded or tires underinflated, the steel carcass ply reinforcement cords in the tires can fatigue, and the tire sidewall can rupture without warning due to overdeflection. Underinflation/overloading can cause permanent damage to tires.

Risk. This condition could result in a sudden failure of a front tire without prior warning, potentially resulting in loss of control of the motorhome.

Vehicle Owner Precautions. Until the tires are replaced,

- a. Do not exceed gross vehicle weight ratings or gross axle weight ratings.
- b. Inspect your front tires for any signs of unusual wear or damage. Do not drive on tires that appear to be excessively worn or damaged.
- c. Be sure to maintain air pressure in the front tires at the maximum rating pressure of 105 psi.

- d. It is critical that you:
- Know your tire and axle ratings
 - Know your actual per corner weights
 - Maintain proper tire pressures at all times
 - Check your tire pressure on a regular basis

Remedy. Newmar will replace your front tires with Michelin 275/70R22.5 XZA1 tires, which provide a greater carrying capacity. Newmar offers this replacement, including installation, at no cost. Please call toll free 888-852-8446 to locate a participating servicing location. After the new tires have been installed, (this service should take less than two hours). It is important that you do not rotate tires front to rear. Newmar will issue you a new certification tag documenting the new front tires installation and simultaneously increasing the rear tire inflation pressures to 105 psi.

Problems or Questions. If you experience any problems obtaining replacement tires, please contact Newmar's toll free customer service at (888) 852-8446 for assistance. If you believe Newmar has failed or is unable to remedy without charge the condition outlined above within a reasonable time, you may submit a complaint to the Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590 or call the toll free auto safety hotline at 888-327-4236.

Newmar apologizes for any inconvenience this may cause, but please understand that we are committed to your satisfaction and safety.

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