

DAIMLERCHRYSLER

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DaimlerChrysler Corporation

Stephan J. Speth

Director

Vehicle Compliance & Safety Affairs

May 4, 2004

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

04V-216  
(3 pages)

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

Attached is DaimlerChrysler Corporation's Defect Information Report, complying with the requirements of 49 CFR Part 573, Defect and Noncompliance Reports, which contains details of a potential safety related defect in some 2002-2004 model year Dodge Dakota and some 2002-2003 model year Dodge Durango vehicles. The front windshield wiper module motor assembly, depending on vehicle usage, may be susceptible to water intrusion that could cause internal corrosion and result in partial or complete loss of front windshield wiping capability.

DaimlerChrysler Corporation will conduct a voluntary safety recall to install revised front windshield wiper module assemblies on all affected vehicles.

Sincerely,

  
Stephan J. Speth

Enclosure: Defect Information Report for DaimlerChrysler Corporation Recall # 022

cc: K. C. DeMeter, NHTSA  
Division of Occupational Safety & Health  
California Department of Industrial Relations

**DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT FOR DAIMLERCHRYSLER RECALL # D22**

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Submission date: May 4, 2004

**Identifying classification of vehicles potentially affected:**

Make	Model	Model Year	Inclusive Dates of Manufacture	Vehicle Volume (estimated)
Dodge	Dakota	2002-2004	04/24/2002-09/15/2003	168,237
Dodge	Durango	2002-2003	04/24/2002-08/21/2003	153,951

**Estimated percentage containing defect: Unknown****Description of defect:**

The front windshield wiper module motor on some vehicles may be susceptible to water intrusion that could cause internal corrosion and result in partial or complete loss of front windshield wiping capability.

**The name, address and telephone number of the supplier who manufactured the subject components:**

Valeo Wiper Systems North America  
3000 University Drive  
Auburn Hills, MI 48326  
(248)-340-3000

**The following chronology of principal events occurred between mid January 2004 and April 2004 and led to the determination of a defect:**

- On January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2004, a DaimlerChrysler Corporation internal fleet reported intermittent loss of front windshield wiper function on five of twelve 2003 model year Dodge Durango vehicles.
- During late January and the majority of February, the front windshield wiper module assemblies were removed from the twelve fleet vehicles and sent to the supplier for analysis. Analysis showed that several of the modules had varying degrees of internal motor corrosion that may have contributed to their inability to function properly.
- A review of the module change history with the responsible engineering group in mid February revealed that a plastic shield covering the top half of the motor assembly had been deleted from the assembly in April of 2002. Because the front wiper motor is protected by the vehicle cowl screen, the shield was believed to be unnecessary and redundant. It was established that removal of the plastic shield had been validated prior to implementation of the change.
- It was further discovered during the February review that the plastic shield had been

## **DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT FOR DAIMLERCHRYSLER RECALL # D22**

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added back to the assembly as a precautionary measure in September of 2003 due to a very slight increase in warranty replacement for the module (0.32 of 100 vehicles). At this point, with replacements being isolated and no indication of a potential trend, this action in addition to the normal warranty coverage on the vehicles built without the shield was thought to be sufficient.

- Subsequent to the new information known from the emission fleet vehicles, a review of wiper module warranty data indicated an increased level of input for vehicles built without the shield (1.14 of 100 vehicles). It further was established that the emission fleet vehicles were all built during this period.
- In order to further understand both the cause and the growth potential of the issue, a survey was commissioned to analyze front wiper module assemblies from vehicles built during the suspect period. The survey was conducted from late February through April. While all assemblies were still functional, the survey established that approximately 30% of the module assemblies had evidence of some level of water exposure inside the motor assembly. The investigation also established that the previous testing did not replicate possible build variations which could reduce the effectiveness of the cowl screen to fully protect the motor. Therefore it was established that the shield was critical in protecting the wiper motor assembly from potential water run off from the vehicle windshield.
- Analysis of field report data indicated several conditions may occur from wiper motor water intrusion including a loss of wiper park memory position, loss of the low speed setting, blown fuses, or complete motor seizure.
- In addition to related warranty claims, DaimlerChrysler Corporation is aware of 54 customer complaints and 36 field reports that may be related to this condition. None of these reports allege accident or injury.
- This data was presented to the Vehicle Regulations Committee on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2004 who decided to conduct a safety recall to repair affected vehicles in order to ensure the appropriate long term durability of the windshield wiper system.

### **Statement of measures to be taken to correct defect:**

DaimlerChrysler Corporation will replace the front windshield wiper module with a new front windshield wiper module assembly with a water shield. DaimlerChrysler expects to initiate national notification to both dealers and owners when a sufficient quantity of parts becomes available. DaimlerChrysler's scheduling information for implementing this recall is not available at this time.

DaimlerChrysler Corporation has a longstanding policy and practice of reimbursing owners who have incurred the cost of repairing a problem that subsequently becomes the subject of a field action. To ensure consistency, DaimlerChrysler Corporation, as part of the owner letter, will request that customers send original receipt and/or other adequate proof of payment to the company for confirmation of the expense.