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OFFICE OF DEFECTS
INVESTIGATION

Timothy A. Blubaugh
Director
Government Technical Affairs

Freightliner LLC
4747 N. Channel Avenue
Portland, OR 97217-7889
503.745.5219 Telephone
503.745.5600 Facsimile
TimothyBlubaugh@Freightliner.com

May 24, 2004

Kenneth N. Weinstein
Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance (NSA-01)
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

04V-272
(2 pages)

Re: Defect Information Report FL-424,
8,000 Pound Front Axle with 4-piece spindle nut set

Mr. Weinstein:

In accordance with Part 573 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Freightliner LLC herewith reports a safety campaign to recall approximately 6,500 Freightliner Business Class, Business Class M2, and Sterling Acterra trucks and truck-tractors with a defect in the front wheel bearing adjustment.

Attached is Freightliner's Defect Information Report.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

Timothy Blubaugh

Cc: Michael Mason, CAL-OSHA
DOSH, Legal Unit
10th Floor
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Enclosure

Certified Mail Article Number:

7002 3150 0004 1405 0624



A DaimlerChrysler Company

Defect Information Report (Section 573.6)

May 24, 2004

(c)(1) **Manufacturer:** Freightliner LLC
P.O. BOX 3840
Portland, Oregon 97208
(503) 745-6210

Brands: Freightliner, Sterling

(c)(2) **Vehicles Identification:**

Model(s) affected: Freightliner Business Class, and Business Class M2, Sterling Acterra,

Manufacture Dates: Sterling Acterra – August 2000 through October 2003

Freightliner Business Class – October 2002 through October 2003

Freightliner Business Class M2 – January 2002 through October 2003

Base for determining population: 8,000 pound front axles on these model with four piece spindle nut set manufactured from August 2000 (recall FL-265, NHTSA 00V-224) through a production change made in October 2003.

Component manufacturer if other than the vehicle manufacturer: not applicable

(c)(3) **Total number of vehicles potentially affected:** approximately 6,500

(c)(4) **Percentage of vehicles estimated to contain the defect:** unknown

(c)(5) **Description of the defect:** The front spindle nut may be over-tightened causing preload on the front wheel bearings which may lead to premature bearing wear. If allowed to progress, the front wheel assembly may separate from the vehicle.

(c)(6) **Chronology of principal events:** In October 2003, Field Service reported incidents of front wheel separations caused by early wear on front axle wheel bearings on Acterra and Business Class trucks with 8,000 pound front axles. Service Engineering, Engineering, Manufacturing Engineering, and Test Engineering reviewed the assembly procedures and determined the torque & back-off method to install the spindle nut did not result in consistent endplay adjustment.

(c)(7) **Noncompliance-test or other data:** not applicable

(c)(8) **Remedial program:** Repairs will be performed by Freightliner dealerships and Direct Warranty customers, i.e., customers approved by Freightliner to do their own warranty repairs.

Estimated Owner Notification Date: Customer notification will be by first class mail using Freightliner records to determine the customers affected. This will be completed approximately July 23, 2004

Reimbursement Plan: Copies will be submitted as a supplemental report when available.

(c)(9) **Communications sent to dealers and owners:** Copies will be submitted as a supplemental report when available.

(c)(10) **Copy of proposed owner notification letter:** A draft will be sent for ODI review when available.

(c)(11) **Manufacturer's campaign number:** FL-424