

DAIMLERCHRYSLER

July 2, 2004

DaimlerChrysler Corporation
Stephan J. Speth
Director
Vehicle Compliance & Safety Affairs

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

04V-336
(3 pages)

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DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

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 2004 model year Chrysler Sebring Convertible vehicles. The left hand side rear seatbelt retractor bolt may not have been tightened to specification. DaimlerChrysler Corporation will conduct a voluntary safety recall to tighten the retractor bolt to the proper specification.

Sincerely,



Stephan J. Speth

Enclosures: Defect Information Report for DaimlerChrysler Corporation Recall D32

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

DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT FOR DAIMLERCHRYSLER RECALL D32

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Submission date: July 2, 2004

Identifying classification of vehicles potentially affected:

Make	Model	Model Year	Inclusive Dates of Manufacture	Vehicle Volume
Chrysler	Sebring Convertible	2004	6/1/2004 – 6/7/2004	312 (estimate)

Estimated percentage containing defect: 0.7%

Description of defect:

The left hand side rear seatbelt retractor bolt may not have been properly tightened. This may result in the rear seat occupant being improperly restrained in a vehicle crash.

The following chronology of principal events occurred in June 2004 and led to the determination of a defect:

- On June 7, 2004, a rattle condition was detected during the Customer Satisfaction Audit (CSA) at DaimlerChrysler Corporation's Sterling Heights Assembly Plant (SHAP). It was established that the rattle was from the left hand side rear seat belt retractor bolt which was not properly tightened.
- Review of the CSA vehicle history established that the vehicle did not pass torque during vehicle assembly, was identified for repair, and was subsequently bought off in system as corrected by the repair person.
- SHAP stopped shipment and contained vehicles in their shipping yard.
- Review of the vehicle assembly process established that the left hand side rear retractor installation was moved to a new assembly station on May 18, 2004. After the move, the tool used at this new station did not properly communicate with the torque monitoring and recording system, so a re-torque operation was immediately implemented.
- It was further determined that on May 19, 2004, the tool communication issue was resolved. However, the plant continued to experience a high rate of rejects for no torque. It was established that this was a result of a work station configuration issue.
- The investigation further established that the re-torque operation was eliminated on the first shift during the week of June 1, 2004. The second shift never removed the re-torque operation. SHAP runs two shifts.
- Approximately 1500 vehicles were inspected at the assembly plant for proper retractor

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fastener torque with a fall out rate of approximately 0.7%. Furthermore, all nonconforming conditions were identified on vehicles that were built on the first shift during the week of June 1, 2004 after the re-torque operation was eliminated.

- The right hand side rear retractor installation process was not changed and is therefore unaffected.
- There are no complaints or field reports associated with this condition.
- This data was presented to the Vehicle Regulations Committee on June 29, 2004 who decided to conduct a safety recall to repair affected vehicles.

Statement of measures to be taken to correct defect:

DaimlerChrysler Corporation will tighten the left side rear seat belt retractor bolt to the proper specification on all affected vehicles. DaimlerChrysler Corporation expects to initiate national notification to both dealers and owners in July 2004.

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.