



A DaimlerChrysler Company

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August 5, 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

**Re: Defect Information Report FL- 430 Condor Steering Gear Bolts**

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 1,800 Freightliner Condor and Sterling Condor trucks manufactured by American LaFrance from May 2000 to vehicles built May 20, 2004 with a defect in the steering gear mounting bolt length.

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:

7003 2260 0001 3402 7126



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## Defect Information Report (Section 573.6)

August 5, 2004

(c)(1) **Manufacturer:** Freightliner LLC  
P.O. BOX 3849  
Portland, Oregon 97208  
(503) 745-5210

**Brands:** Freightliner, Sterling

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

**Model(s) affected:** Freightliner Condor and Sterling Condor manufactured by American LaFrance

**Manufacture Dates:** from May 2000 to vehicles built May 20, 2004.

**Basis for determining population:** All Condors manufactured prior to a production change in May 2004 to increase the length of the steering gear mounting bolts.

**Component manufacturer if other than the vehicle manufacturer:** not applicable

(c)(3) **Total number of vehicles potentially affected:** 1,600

(c)(4) **Percentage of vehicles estimated to contain the defect:** 100%

(c)(5) **Description of the defect:** The bolts that attach the steering gear to the chassis mounting bracket have less than full thread engagement in the steering gear. The bolts may become loose.

(c)(6) **Chronology of principal events:**

In May 2004, American LaFrance Field Service received a report from a fleet with several trucks with loose steering boxes on the RH side. One truck was towed in when the steering box fell off the RH side. Nine warranty claims have been received for loose steering gears on Condors. Customer reports have also been received by ALF for trucks that are out of warranty. American LaFrance inspected additional trucks and found more with loose steering gear bolts.

The four  $\frac{3}{4}$ "x1-3/4" steering gear fasteners used in production have approximately 5/8" thread engagement in the steering gear. One inch is the recommended thread engagement.

There have been no reports of accidents.

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

(c)(8) **Remedial program:** The steering gear mounting bolts will be replaced. Repairs will be performed by Freightliner and Sterling 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 October 1, 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-430



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration

400 Seventh Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20590

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT FAX SHEET OF RECEIPT OF DEFECT INFORMATION  
REPORT SUBMITTED UNDER 49 CFR PART 573**

Assigned Recall No. **04V-401** by the  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Part 573 Report Date: **August 5, 2004**

Date Faxed/E-Mailed: **August 18, 2004**

MANUFACTURER: **Freightliner LLC**

MANUFACTURER CONTACT: **Timothy Blubaugh, Director  
Government Technical Affairs**

FAX: **503-745-6800**

**SUBJECT: 1,600 Freightliner 2000-2004 Condor and Sterling Condor built by American LaFrance and manufactured from May 2000 through May 20, 2004. The bolts that attach the steering gear to the chassis mounting bracket may become loose. Freightliner Recall No. FL-430.**

This is an acknowledgment for this recall. A formal acknowledgment letter will be written only if we have additional comments or concerns.

Please provide us with a draft owner notification letter for our review before mailing to consumers.

As stated in Part 573.6, submission of the first of six consecutive quarterly status reports is required within one month after the close of the calendar quarter in which notification to purchasers occurs. As stated in your report, owner notification is expected to begin during September or October 2004. Therefore, the first quarterly report will be due by January 30, 2005.

If you have any questions, please call:

Patricia Wallace, Safety Defects Analyst on (202) 366-5232 or  
George Person, Chief on (202) 366-5210  
or Fax at (202) 366-7882  
or e-mail at [Patricia.Wallace@nhtsa.dot.gov](mailto:Patricia.Wallace@nhtsa.dot.gov)  
Recall Management Division