

DAIMLERCHRYSLER

2004 UIC -8 A 9 25

DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

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

December 7, 2004

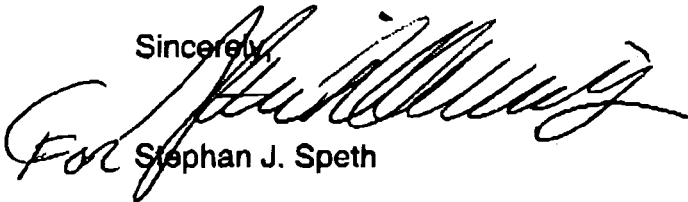
Mr. Kenneth N. Weinstein
Associate Administrator, Safety Assurance
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

04V-578
(4 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 2004 model year Dodge Durango vehicles. The positive battery cable may contact the front suspension upper control arm mounting bracket. Over time, this contact could abrade the battery cable and cause a short circuit, which may result in an underhood fire. DaimlerChrysler Corporation will conduct a voluntary safety recall to inspect the battery cable routing, reposition and secure the cable away from the control arm mounting bracket on the affected vehicles.

Sincerely,



For Stephan J. Speth

Enclosures: Defect Information Report for DaimlerChrysler Corporation Recall D40
Dealer and Owner Notification Letters – Recall D40

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

DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT FOR DAIMLERCHRYSLER RECALL D40

Page 1

Submission date: December 7, 2004

Identifying classification of vehicles potentially affected:

| Make | Model | Model Year | Inclusive Dates of Manufacture | Vehicle Volume | Other |
|-------|---------|------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Dodge | Durango | 2004 | 7/21/2003 – 2/15/2004 | 71,763 total | w/ 5.7L engine |
| | | | 7/21/2003 – 3/31/2004 | | w/ 4.7L engine |
| | | | 7/21/2003 – 7/1/2004 | | w/ 3.7L engine |

The involved Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) range is:

| | |
|------------|-------------|
| <u>Low</u> | <u>High</u> |
| 4F100001 | 4F241832 |

(VIN last eight characters) – 4 = 2004 model year; F = Newark Assembly Plant, Newark, Delaware; and the last six digits = sequential number.

We caution that the above range represents only the lowest and highest VIN sequential numbers included in the recall. This range cannot be used to determine conclusively that a vehicle is involved in the recall because many vehicles with a VIN within the range are not affected by the recall.

Estimated percentage containing defect: Unknown

Description of defect:

The positive battery cable may be contact the front suspension upper control arm mounting bracket. Over time, this contact could abrade the cable and cause a short circuit, which may result in an underhood fire.

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

Lear Corporation
2998 Waterview Drive
Rochester Hills, MI 48309
248-371-8400

DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT FOR DAIMLERCHRYSLER RECALL D40

Page 2

The following chronology of principal events occurred between July of 2004 and November of 2004 and led to the determination of a defect:

- On July 15, 2004, a report was received of an underhood fire on a 2004 model year 3.7L Dodge Durango corporate lease fleet vehicle. There were no injuries.
- Extensive investigation in July and early August determined the cause of the fire to be electrical in nature and indicated signs of unusual current flow.
- Tear down and Engineering evaluation of the vehicle revealed that the positive battery cable insulation had been abraded at the right front suspension upper control arm mounting bracket, resulting in a short circuit to ground.
- Investigation established that the short circuit caused current flow through ground point attachments between the body and the vehicle frame, instead of through the battery negative cable.
- A yard hold was initiated at DaimlerChrysler Corporation's Newark (Deleware) Assembly Plant and all vehicles contained.
- A thorough review of the battery cable and wire harness design history revealed that the supplier had made a mounting clip change during 2004 model year Durango pre-production to assist with harness processing. Engineering investigation revealed that the supplier had inadvertently rotated a take-out location in conjunction with this change, resulting in unpredictable battery cable routing and the potential for bracket contact.
- Additional review of the design history showed that a potential contact condition also existed on 2004 model year Durango vehicles equipped with the 4.7L and 5.7L engines, since the wire harness and front suspension are similar in this area.
- The investigation revealed that an unrelated change to the wire harnesses during the 2004 model year eliminated the potential for contact between the positive battery cable and the control arm mounting bracket. This change was introduced at different times during the model year depending upon the powertrain configuration.
- To assess the potential scope of this condition and confirm effectiveness of the harness change, multiple field surveys of 2004 model year Durango corporate lease fleet and contained vehicles were undertaken between August of 2004 and November of 2004. Over 1,200 total vehicles built before and after the wire harness change, and with all powertrain configurations, were evaluated.
- For vehicles built prior to the wire harness change, survey data showed that 26% (6 of 23) of the 3.7L vehicles exhibited hard contact between the cable and the bracket. 4% (9 of 202) of 4.7L and 43% (64 of 148) of 5.7L vehicles also exhibited contact.
- Over 900 vehicles built after the wire harness change was implemented were evaluated and all showed no routing or contact issues.
- The Dodge Durango was completely redesigned for the 2004 model year, thus prior model year vehicles are not affected.
- A review of all available data sources showed no additional complaints or field reports associated with this condition.

DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT FOR DAIMLERCHRYSLER RECALL D40

Page 3

- This data was presented on November 30, 2004 to the Vehicle Regulations Committee who decided to conduct a safety recall of the affected vehicles.

Statement of measures to be taken to correct defect:

DaimlerChrysler Corporation will conduct a safety recall to inspect the battery cable routing, reposition and secure the cable away from the control arm mounting bracket on the suspect vehicles. DaimlerChrysler has notified dealers on December 7, 2004 and expects to begin owner notification on December 14, 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.