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2004 DEC 22 P 4: 53

OFFICE OF
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

DaimlerChrysler Corporation

Stephan J. Speth

Director

Vehicle Compliance & Safety Affairs

December 15, 2004

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

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

Reference: NHTSA Identification Number 04V-579

Enclosed are representative copies of communications relating to the 2005 model year vehicles involved in the referenced recall. DaimlerChrysler expects to notify dealers during the week of December 20, 2004 and vehicle owners during the week of December 27, 2004. The exact number of manufactured vehicles in the recall is 26,339.

The involved Vehicle Identification Number range is:

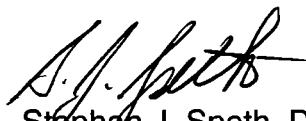
<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>
5N505387	5N569193

(VIN last eight characters) - 5 = 2005 model year; N = Sterling Heights Assembly Plant, Sterling Heights Michigan; 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.

This completes DaimlerChrysler's package of information for this recall as required by the Defects Report Regulation.

Sincerely,



Stephan J. Speth, Director
Vehicle Compliance and Safety Affairs

Enclosure: Recall D55

cc: K. C. DeMeter



December 2004

Dealer Service Instructions for:

Safety Recall D55 – Right Steering Knuckle

Models

2005 (JR) Dodge Stratus Sedan and Chrysler Sebring Sedan/Convertible

NOTE: This recall applies only to the above vehicles built from September 8, 2004 through November 5, 2004 (MDH 090806 through 110519).

IMPORTANT: Many of the vehicles within the above build period have already been inspected or repaired and, therefore, have been excluded from this recall.

IMPORTANT: Some of the involved vehicles may be in dealer new vehicle inventory. Federal law requires you to stop sale and complete this recall service on these vehicles before retail delivery. Dealers should also consider this requirement to apply to used vehicle inventory and should perform this recall on vehicles in for service. Involved vehicles can be determined by using the VIP inquiry process.

Subject

The right steering knuckle on about 26,000 of the above vehicles may have been improperly manufactured and could break. This may cause a loss of steering control and result in a crash without warning.

Repair

The right steering knuckle must be inspected and replaced if necessary.

Alternate Transportation

Dealers should attempt to minimize customer inconvenience by placing the owner in a loaner vehicle if inspection determines that steering knuckle replacement is required and the vehicle must be held overnight.

Parts Information

Part Number Description
CBB0D551 Right Steering Knuckle Package

Each package contains:

<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	Steering Knuckle, Right
1	Upper Ball Joint Nut
1	Lower Ball Joint Castle Nut
1	Tie Rod Nut
1	Cotter Pin
1	Drive Hub Nut

Due to the small number of involved vehicles expected to require **steering knuckle** replacement, no parts will be distributed initially. **Steering knuckle packages should be ordered only after inspection determines that replacement is required. *Very few vehicles are expected to require steering knuckle replacement.***

Service Procedure

A. Inspect Right Steering Knuckle

1. Raise the vehicle on an appropriate hoist.
2. Inspect the right steering knuckle casting cavity identification code (Figure 1).
3. ➤ **If the cavity code is a “2”, the steering knuckle must be replaced.** Continue with Section B – Replace Right Steering Knuckle.
- **If the cavity code is “1”, “3” or “4”,** no further action is required. Lower the vehicle and return it to the customer.

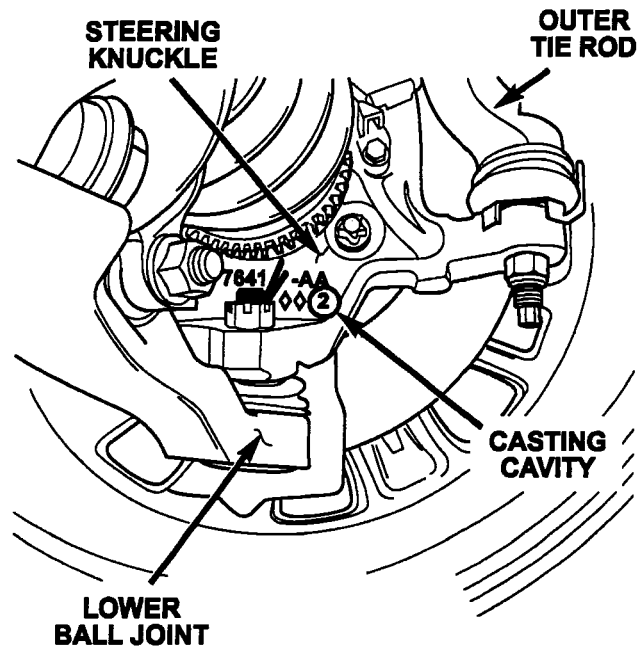


Figure 1

Service Procedure (Continued)

B. Replace Right Steering Knuckle

NOTE: Only cavity “2” steering knuckles, as determined by the inspection in Section A, require replacement. Very few vehicles are expected to require steering knuckle replacement.

1. Remove the right front wheel and tire assembly.
2. With the brakes applied, loosen the right front hub nut, then release the brakes.

CAUTION: Wheel bearing damage will result if the hub nut is loosened and then the vehicle is rolled on the ground or the weight of the vehicle is allowed to be supported by the tires.

3. Using a C-clamp, slightly compress the caliper piston into the bore.
4. Remove the two (2) bolts that secure the disc brake caliper adapter to the steering knuckle (Figure 2).
5. Remove the disc brake caliper and adapter from the knuckle as an assembly. Hang the caliper assembly out of the way using a wire or bungee cord.

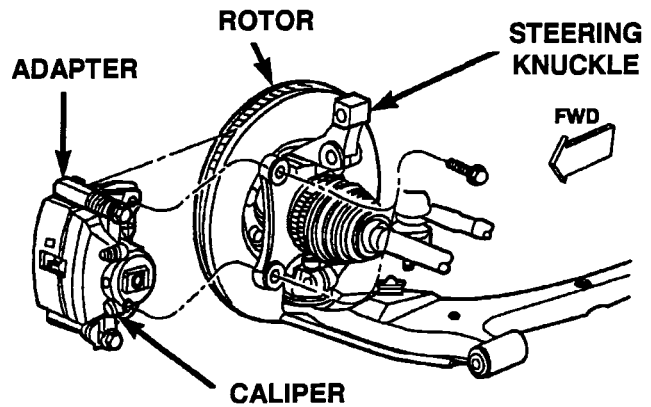


Figure 2

CAUTION: Do not allow the brake caliper to hang by the brake hose as this may damage the hose.

6. Remove the clips that secure the brake rotor to the wheel studs.
7. Mark the brake rotor position in relation to one of the wheel studs and then remove the brake rotor.

Service Procedure (Continued)

8. Remove the nut that attaches the outer tie rod to the steering knuckle (Figure 3). Remove the nut by holding the tie rod stud with a socket while loosening and removing the nut with a wrench.
9. Remove the tie rod end from the steering knuckle using Special Tool C-3894-A.
10. Remove the ABS wheel speed sensor wire routing bracket from the steering knuckle, if equipped (Figure 4).
11. Remove the ABS wheel speed sensor from the steering knuckle, if equipped.
12. Remove the lower ball joint heat shield from the steering knuckle.
13. Remove the cotter pin and castle nut from the lower ball joint stud (Figure 5).

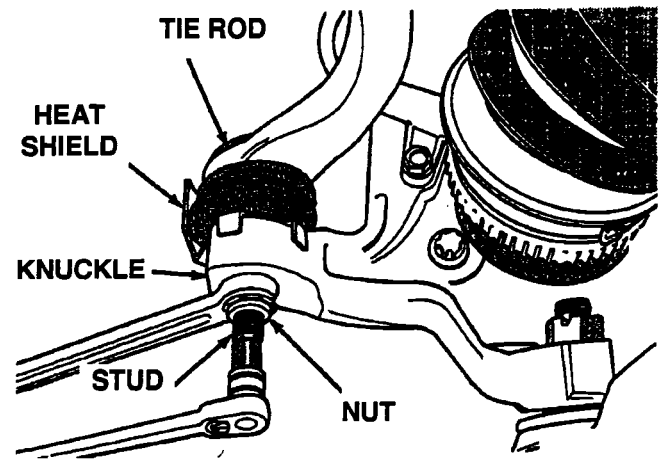


Figure 3

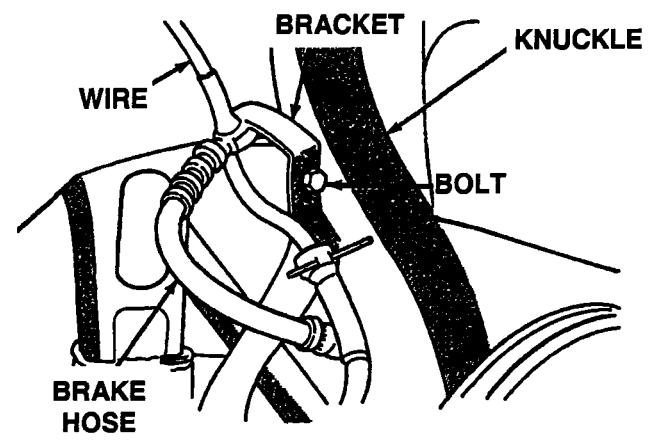


Figure 4

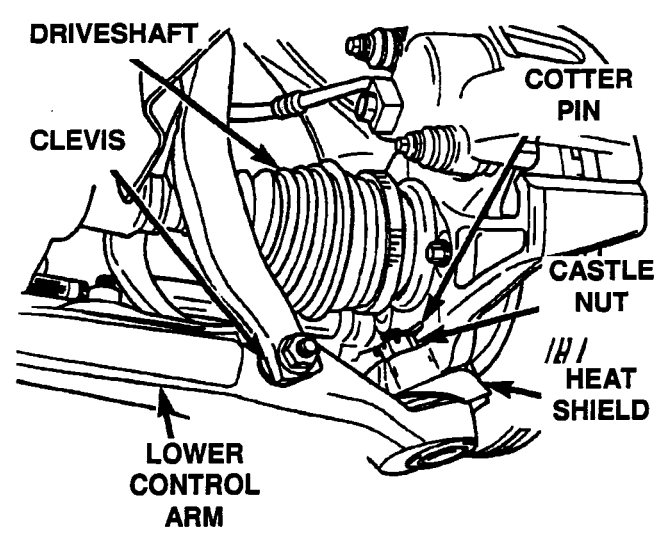


Figure 5

Service Procedure (Continued)

14. Turn the steering knuckle so that the front is facing as far outboard as possible. Using a hammer, strike the boss on the steering knuckle until the knuckle separates from the lower ball joint stud (Figure 6).

CAUTION: Do NOT insert any tool between the steering knuckle and the lower ball joint to separate them.

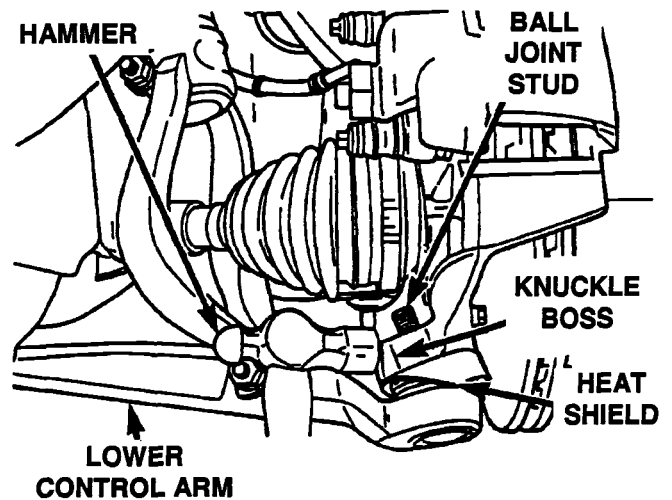


Figure 6

15. Remove the nut from the upper ball joint stud.
16. Remove the upper ball joint stud from the steering knuckle using Special Tool C-3894-A (Figure 7).
17. Lift up on the steering knuckle to separate it from the lower ball joint stud. Use caution so that the ball joint seal does not get cut.

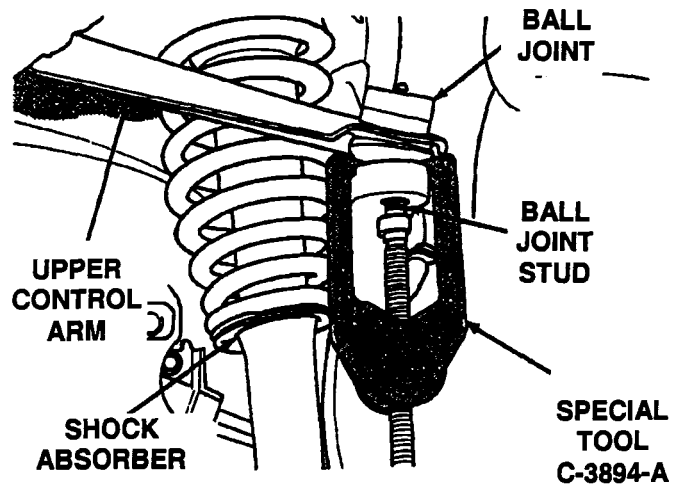


Figure 7

18. Prepare to hang the driveshaft by wrapping a wire or bungee cord around it so that the C/V joint is not damaged when the shaft is separated from the hub.
19. Separate the steering knuckle from the outer C/V joint. Hold the driveshaft in place while pulling the steering knuckle away from the outer C/V joint (Figure 8).

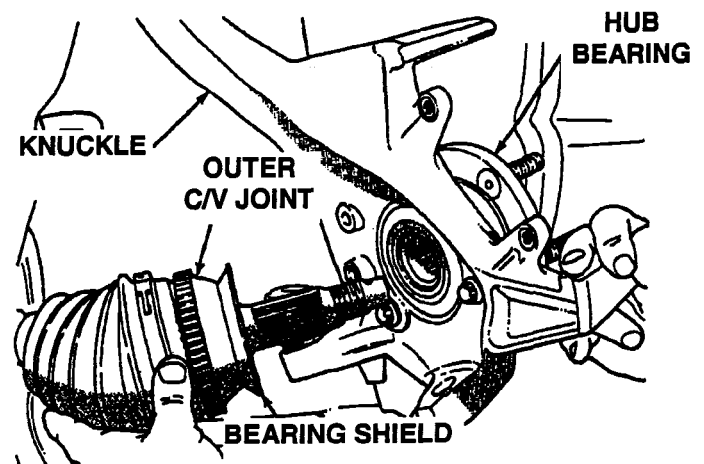
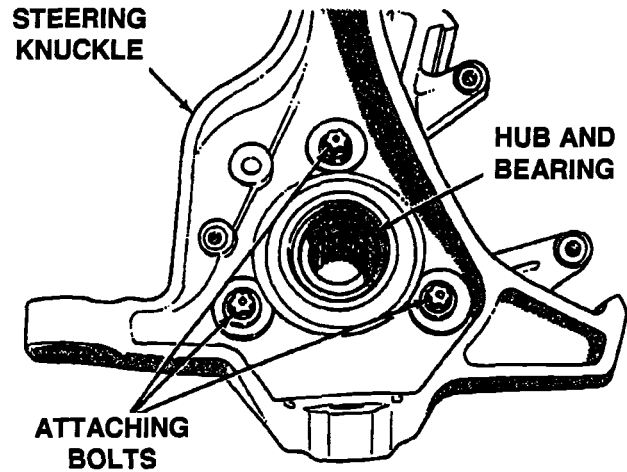


Figure 8

20. Remove the steering knuckle from the vehicle.

Service Procedure (Continued)

21. Remove the three (3) bolts that attach the hub and bearing assembly to the steering knuckle (Figure 9).
22. Remove the hub and bearing assembly from the steering knuckle. Tap the hub and bearing assembly with a soft-faced hammer to remove it if necessary. Discard the knuckle (Figure 9).

**Figure 9**

23. Install the original hub and bearing assembly into the provided steering knuckle (Figure 9). Align the hub bolt holes with the holes in the steering knuckle.
24. Install the three (3) hub and bearing attaching bolts. Evenly tighten the bolts to ensure that the bearing is square to the face of the steering knuckle. Tighten the bolts to 80 ft-lbs (110 N·m).
25. Slide the driveshaft into the front hub/bearing as the new steering knuckle assembly is installed onto the lower ball joint stud (Figure 8).
26. Install the new lower ball joint castle nut but do not tighten.
27. Install the upper ball joint into the steering knuckle (Figure 7).
28. Install the new upper ball joint nut. Using a crow's foot and a torque wrench, tighten the nut to 20 ft-lbs (27 N·m).
29. Using a crow's foot and a torque wrench, tighten the lower ball joint castle nut to 55 ft-lbs (75 N·m) and then install the new cotter pin (Figure 5).
30. Install the lower ball joint heat shield.
31. Install the ABS wheel speed sensor, if equipped.

Service Procedure (Continued)

32. Install the ABS wheel speed sensor wire routing bracket (Figure 4).

33. Install the outer tie rod stud into the steering knuckle. Start the outer tie rod attaching nut onto the tie rod stud. While holding the stud stationary, tighten the nut to 40 ft-lbs (55 N·m) using a crowfoot and socket (Figure 10).

IMPORTANT: Ensure that the tie rod heat shield is properly positioned.

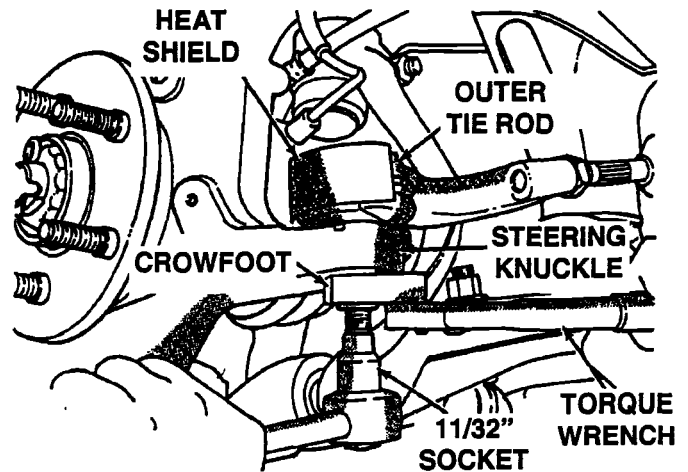


Figure 10

34. Align the brake rotor to the wheel studs using the mark made previously and install the brake rotor.

35. Install the brake caliper and adapter assembly over the brake rotor (Figure 2).

36. Install the caliper adapter bolts (Figure 2). Tighten the bolts to 60 ft-lbs (80 N·m).

37. Install the hub nut onto the axle shaft. With the brake applied, tighten the hub nut to 150 ft-lbs (203 N·m).

38. Install the right front wheel and tire assembly. Tighten the lug nuts to 100 ft-lbs (135 N·m).

39. Lower the vehicle and place it on an alignment rack.

40. Install the alignment equipment onto the vehicle per the alignment equipment manufacturer's instructions.

41. Adjust the front toe to the preferred specification (left or right side toe = $+0.12^\circ \pm 0.10^\circ$, total toe = $+0.24^\circ \pm 0.20^\circ$).

42. Remove the alignment equipment.

Completion Reporting and Reimbursement

Claims for vehicles that have been serviced must be submitted on the DealerCONNECT Claim Entry Screen located on the Service tab. Claims submitted will be used by DaimlerChrysler to record recall service completions and provide dealer payments.

Use one of the following labor operation numbers and time allowances:

	Labor Operation Number	Time Allowance
Inspect right steering knuckle	02-D5-51-81	0.2 hours
Inspect and replace right steering knuckle (includes toe adjustment)	02-D5-51-82	1.3 hours

Add the cost of the parts package, if necessary, plus applicable dealer allowance to your claim.

NOTE: See the Warranty Administration Manual, Recall Claim Processing Section, for complete recall claim processing instructions.

Dealer Notification

All dealers will receive a copy of this dealer recall notification letter by mail. Two additional copies will be sent through the DCMMS. To view this recall on DealerCONNECT, select TechCONNECT on the Service tab, click on “Search Bulletins/Recalls”, enter the recall code and then click on the “Search” button.

Owner Notification and Service Scheduling

All involved vehicle owners known to DaimlerChrysler are being notified of the service requirement by first class mail. They are requested to schedule appointments for this service with their dealers. A generic copy of the owner letter is attached.

Enclosed with each owner letter is an Owner Notification postcard to allow owners to update our records if applicable.

Vehicle Lists, Global Recall System, VIP and Dealer Follow Up

All involved vehicles have been entered into the DealerCONNECT Global Recall System (GRS) and Vehicle Information Plus (VIP) for dealer inquiry as needed. Involved dealers were also mailed a copy of their vehicle (VIN) list with the dealer recall notification letter.

GRS provides involved dealers with an updated VIN list of their incomplete vehicles. The owner's name, address and phone number are listed if known. Completed vehicles are removed from GRS within several days of repair claim submission.

To use this system, click on the “**Service**” tab and then click on “**Global Recall System.**” Your dealer's VIN list for each recall displayed can be sorted by: those vehicles that were unsold at recall launch, those with a phone number, city, zip code, or VIN sequence.

Dealers must perform this repair on all unsold vehicles before retail delivery. Dealers should also use the VIN list to follow up with all owners to schedule appointments for this repair.

Recall VIN lists may contain confidential, restricted owner name and address information that was obtained from the Department of Motor Vehicles of various states. Use of this information is permitted for this recall only and is strictly prohibited from all other use.

Additional Information

If you have any questions or need assistance in completing this action, please contact your Service and Parts District Manager.

Customer Services Field Operations
DaimlerChrysler Corporation

DAIMLERCHRYSLER

*Buckle up
for Safety!*

SAFETY RECALL – RIGHT STEERING KNUCKLE

Dear: (Name)

This notice is sent to you in accordance with the requirements of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act. DaimlerChrysler Corporation has decided that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety, exists in some 2005 model year Dodge Stratus and Chrysler Sebring vehicles.

The problem is... The right steering knuckle on your vehicle (VIN: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx) may have been improperly manufactured and could break. This may cause a loss of steering control and result in a crash without warning.

What your dealer will do... DaimlerChrysler will repair your vehicle free of charge (parts and labor). To do this, your dealer will inspect the right steering knuckle and replace it if necessary. The inspection will only take a few minutes to complete and knuckle replacement, if necessary, will require about 1½ hours. However, additional time may be necessary depending on how dealer appointments are scheduled and processed.

What you must do to ensure your safety... Simply contact your dealer right away to schedule a service appointment. Remember to bring this letter with you to your dealer.

If you need help... If you have questions or concerns which your dealer is unable to resolve, please contact DaimlerChrysler at 1-800-853-1403.

Please help us update our records, by filling out the enclosed prepaid postcard, if any of the conditions listed on the card apply to you or your vehicle. Be sure to print the last eight (8) characters of the VIN (VVVVVVVV) and notification code D55 on the postcard.

If you have already experienced this condition and have paid to have it repaired, you may send your original receipts and/or other adequate proof of payment to the following address for reimbursement: DaimlerChrysler, P.O. Box 610207, Port Huron, MI 48061-0207, Attention: Reimbursement.

If your dealer fails or is unable to remedy this defect without charge and within a reasonable time, you may submit a written complaint to the Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590, or call the toll-free Auto Safety Hotline at 1-888-327-4236.

We're sorry for any inconvenience, but we are sincerely concerned about your safety. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Customer Services Field Operations
DaimlerChrysler Corporation
Notification Code D55

Note to lessors receiving this recall: Federal regulation requires that you forward this recall notice to the lessee within 10 days.