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November 16, 2005

Ron Medford
Sr. Associate Administrator for Vehicle Safety
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

*05V-541
(11 pages)*

**Re: Defect Information Report FL-464,
Fontaine Modification Sit Down Dual Drive Conversion, Steering Pinchbolt**

Mr. Medford:

In accordance with Part 573 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Freightliner LLC herewith reports a safety campaign to recall 198 Freightliner Business Class M2 trucks manufactured August 2004 to October 2005 and further manufactured to add right hand steering control by Fontaine Modification. The pinchbolt at the steering shaft connection to the LH miter box may have been improperly tightened.

Attached are Freightliner's Defect Information Report and the Defect Information Report from Fontaine.

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 3403 5893

Defect Information Report

(Section 573.6)

November 16, 2005

(c)(1) **Manufacturer:** Freightliner LLC
P.O. BOX 3849
Portland, Oregon 97208
(503) 745-5219
Brands: Freightliner Trucks

(c)(2) **Vehicles identification:**

Model(s) affected: Business Class M2

Model Years affected: 2005, 2006

Manufacture Dates: August 2004 to October 2005

Basis for determining population: M2 Business Class trucks further manufactured by Fontaine Modification to add right hand steering control. Affected vehicles were modified prior to steering shaft fastener changes made by Fontaine in October 2005. Production serial numbers were identified by Fontaine.

Component manufacturer if other than the vehicle manufacturer:

Fontaine Modification
9827 Mt Holly Road
Charlotte NC 28120

(c)(3) **Total number of vehicles potentially affected:** 198

(c)(4) **Percentage of vehicles estimated to contain the defect:** less than 3%

(c)(5) **Description of the defect:** The pinchbolt that secures the lower steering shaft connection to the LH miter box may have been improperly tightened. Improper hardware was used to install the steering cross shaft. Reference attached Defect Information Report from Fontaine.

49CFR Section 577.5(f) Evaluation of the risk to motor vehicle safety:

The defect may cause a loss of steering control and a crash without prior warning.

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

On October 26, 2005, Fontaine Mod Center notified Freightliner that they would submit a defect report to NHTSA to recall M2 Sit Down Dual Drive conversions that may have been manufactured with improperly torqued pinchbolts on the steering intermediate shaft connection to the miter box on the LH side. Fontaine had received a report from a final stage manufacturer dated 10/20/05 of loose pinch bolts that had fallen out.

Fontaine has also developed a field modification to add a thru-bolt for the cross shaft connection at the RH miter box.

Reference attached Defect Information Report from Fontaine Modification.

Freightliner started a phone campaign to notify dealers to do a preliminary check on the steering shaft pinchbolt at the LH miter box connection.

(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. Dealer notification is expected to be January 9, 2006. The lower steering shaft pinchbolt at the connection will be inspected and replaced if loose. Through bolts on the steering cross shaft will be replaced.

Estimated Owner Notification Date: Customers will be notified by first class mail using Freightliner records to determine the customers affected. This will be completed approximately January 9, 2006

Reimbursement Plan: All prior repairs have been covered under warranty

(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-464



Fontaine Modification
9627 Mt Holly Road
Charlotte, NC 28120
(704) 409-1614
(704) 392-0460 Fax
info@fontainemod.com
www.fontainemod.com

October 27, 2005

Mr. Timothy Blubaugh
Freightliner LLC
Mail Code: C2D-COM
4747 N. Channel Ave
Portland, OR 97217

Ref.: Notice of Defect

Dear Tim,

This notice is sent to you in accordance with the requirements of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act.

This is to alert you that Fontaine Modification has decided a defect possibly exists in some Freightliner M2 Model trucks with the Sit-Down Dual Drive (SDDD) option manufactured between August 2004 and June 2005. This defect relates to motor vehicle safety.

Fontaine Modification has discovered the Freightliner LH steering U-joint pinch bolt (P/N 14-15639) may have been improperly torqued on some units potentially causing the bolt to fail out. Since this defect could result in a loss of vehicle steering, all the affected vehicles need to be removed from service immediately until they can be inspected. This defect may involve as many as **102** M2 trucks built during the aforementioned period.

Identifying Affected Units:

Attached you will find a spreadsheet detailing the **102** VIN's as well as an illustration highlighting the location (#1) of the LH steering U-joint pinch bolt.

Recall Inspection & Replacement Instructions:

Locate and visually inspect LH steering U-joint pinch bolt at location #1.

1. If pinch bolt and hex nut remain in place, tighten hex nut to 48.6 lb ft torque and affix colored torque seal.
2. If pinch bolt is missing, install Freightliner P/N 14-15639-000 bolt and 14-15640 hex nut in steering U-joint. Tighten nut to 48.6 lb ft torque and affix colored torque seal.

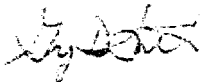
Submit claims to:

FM1 - Fontaine Modification
PO Box 266
Mount Holly, NC 28120
Attention: Customer Service Department

If you are unable to have this safety defect remedied without charge and within a reasonable period of time, you may submit a complaint to the Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590 or call toll free Auto Safety Hotline at 800-424-9393 (Washington, DC area residents may call 202-366-0123).

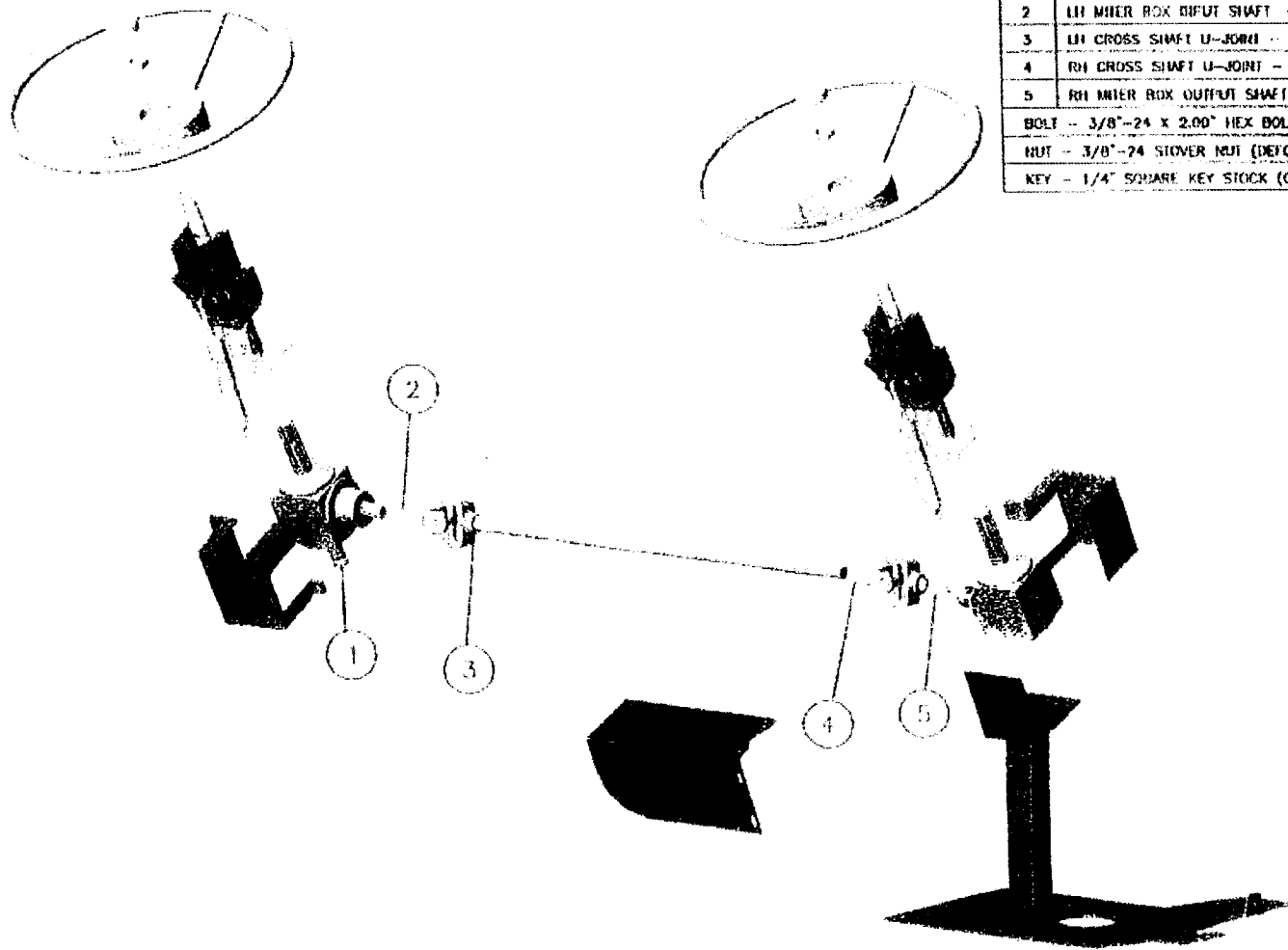
We apologize for any inconvenience in this matter. We have taken this action in order to ensure your complete satisfaction with our products. Your prompt attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Greg D. Smith
General Manager

Cc: Carlos Andrade, FLLC
~~Steve Payne, FLLC~~
Ivan Neblett, FLLC
Bill O'Shea, FM
Jimmie Stone, FM
Jon Youngblood, FM
Jerry Prosser, FM
Jim Van Winkie, FM
John Lemker, Bell Boyd



ITEM	DESCRIPTION
1	FACTORY INTERMEDIATE SHAFT - FACTORY PINCH BOLT
2	LH METER BOX INPUT SHAFT - KEYWAY & THRU-BOLT
3	LH CROSS SHAFT U-JOINT - WELDED KEYWAY & THRU-BOLT
4	RH CROSS SHAFT U-JOINT - WELDED KEYWAY & THRU-BOLT
5	RH METER BOX OUTPUT SHAFT - KEYWAY & THRU-BOLT
BOLT - 3/8"-24 X 2.00" HEX BOLT	
NUT - 3/8"-24 STOVER NUT (DEFORMED THREAD)	
KEY - 1/4" SQUARE KEY STOCK (CUT TO LENGTH)	

Safety Defect and Noncompliance Report Guide for Equipment
PART 573 Defect and Noncompliance Report

On October 24, 2005, Fontaine Modification [MFR] decided that a defect which relates to motor vehicle safety exists in items of motor vehicle equipment listed below, and is furnishing notification to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in accordance with 49 CFR Part 573 Defect and Noncompliance Reports.

Date this report was prepared: October 25, 2005

Furnish the manufacturer's identification code for this recall (if applicable):

1. Identify the full corporate name of the fabricating manufacturer/brand name/trademark owner of the recalled item of equipment. If the recalled item of equipment is imported, provide the name and mailing address of the designated agent as prescribed by 49 U.S.C. §30164.

Fontaine Modification

Identify the corporate official, by name and title, whom the agency should contact with respect to this recall.

Jim Van Winkle, President, Fontaine Modification

Telephone Number: (704) 392-8562 Fax No.: (704) 392-8466

Name and Title of Person who prepared this report.

Greg D. Smith, General Manager, Fontaine Modification

Signed:



¹ Each Manufacturer must furnish a report, to the Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance, for each defect or noncompliance condition which relates to motor vehicle safety.

This guide was developed from 49 CFR Part 573, "Defect and Noncompliance Reports" and also outlines information currently requested. Any questions, please consult the complete Part 573 or contact Mr. Jon White at (202) 366-5226 or by FAX at (202) 366-7882.

I. Identify the Recalled Items of Equipment

2. Identify the Items of Equipment Involved in this Recall, for each make and model or applicable item of equipment product line (provide illustrations or photographs as necessary to describe the item of equipment), provide:

Generic name of the item: Pinch Bolt

Make: Model:

Part Number: 14-15639-000 Size: 10mm x 1.25"

Function:

Other information which characterizes/distinguishes the items of equipment to be recalled:
Steering U-joint pinch bolt on LH side of vehicle. Pinch bolt is installed by Freightliner
and used in assembling the sit down dual drive product.

Generic name of the item: Hex Nut

Make: Model:

Part Number: 14-15640-000 Size: 10mm

Function:

Other information which characterizes/distinguishes the items of equipment to be recalled:
Prevailing torque hex nut is affixed to above mentioned Pinch Bolt on steering U-joint.

Identify the approximate percentage of the production of all the recalled models manufactured by your company between the inclusive dates of manufacture provided above, that the recalled model population represents. For example, if the recall involved Widgets equipped with certain items of equipment from January 1, 1996, through April 1, 1997, then what was the percentage of the recalled Widgets of all Widgets manufactured during that time period?

100%

II. Identifying the Recall Population

3. Furnish the total number of items of equipment recalled potentially containing the defect or noncompliance.

<u>Model</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Items Potentially Involved</u>
Freightliner M2 SDDD	2005 & 2006	102

Total Number Potentially Affected by the Recall: 102

4. Furnish the approximate percentage of the total number of items of equipment estimated to actually contain the defect or noncompliance: < 3%

Identify and describe how the recall population was determined—in particular how the recalled models were selected and the basis for the beginning and final dates of manufacture of the recalled items of equipment:

The population was determined from the beginning of the SDDD August 2004 start of production to June 2, 2005. That is the date Fontaine Modification changed how the steering U-joint pinch bolt was installed on LH side of vehicle.

III. Describe the Defect or Noncompliance

5. Describe the defect or noncompliance. The description should address the nature and physical location of the defect or noncompliance. Illustrations should be provided as appropriate.

See attached drawing – location #1. Steering U-joint pinch bolt may have been improperly installed on the collar holding the splined male and female steering shafts connecting the Fontaine Modification 3-way miter box to the vehicle steering shaft.

Describe the cause(s) of the defect or noncompliance condition.

Steering U-joint pinch bolt was improperly torqued at time of installation.

Describe the consequence(s) of the defect or noncompliance condition.

Loss of vehicle steering.

Identify any warning which can (a) precede or (b) occur.

Loose vehicle steering.

IV. Provide the Chronology in Determining the Defect/Noncompliance

If the recall is for a defect, complete item 6, otherwise item 7.

6. **With respect to a defect, furnish a chronological summary (including dates) of all the principle events that were the basis for the determination of the defect. The summary should include, but not be limited to, the number of reports, accidents, injuries, fatalities, and warranty claims.**

Notification via email from customer (Allianz-Madvaet) indicating steering U-joint pinch bolt on 2 of 3 vehicles was improperly installed causing it to fall out or possibly left out during assembly. Email was dated 10/20/05. We have no reports of accidents or injuries as a result of this mis-installation to date. Two vehicles have had warranty claims filed on them.

- ~~7. **With respect to a noncompliance, identify and provide the test results or other data (in chronological order and including dates) on which the noncompliance was determined.**~~

V. Identify the Remedy

8. **Furnish a description of the manufacturer's remedy for the defect or noncompliance. Clearly describe the differences between the recall condition and the remedy.**

Remedy will include visual inspection and torquing to 48.6 lb ft of the steering U-joint pinch bolt plus an application of torque seal.

Clearly describe the distinguishing characteristics of the remedy component/assembly versus the recalled component/assembly.

The recalled steering U-joint pinch bolt may not have been properly torqued and/or have torque seal applied.

Identify and describe how and when the recall condition was corrected in production. If the production remedy was identical to the recall remedy in the field, so state. If the product was discontinued, so state.

Production remedy is identical to recall remedy. (A) Visual inspection to ensure steering U-joint pinch bolt is installed, (B) the proper torque is applied, and (C) installation is finalized with application of torque seal.

VI. Identify the Recall Schedule

Furnish a schedule or agenda (with specific dates) for notification to other manufacturers, dealers/retailers, and purchasers. Please, identify any foreseeable problems with implementing the recall.

Letter was issued to Freightliner on 10/26/05 outlining reason for recall, the parts involved, units affected, and complete remedy. (Reference attached drawing of affected area.)

VII. Furnish Recall Communications

9. **Furnish a final copy of all notices, bulletins, and other communications that relate directly to the defect or noncompliance and which are sent to more than one manufacturer, distributor, or purchaser. This includes all communications (including both original and follow-up) concerning this recall from the time your company determines the defect or noncompliance condition on, not just the initial notification. A DRAFT copy of the notification documents should be submitted to this office by Fax (202-366-7882) for review prior to mailing.**

Note: These documents are to be submitted separately from those provided in accordance with Part 573.8 requirements.

See attached documents.

The Privacy Act of 1974 - Public Law 93-579, As Amended: This information is requested pursuant to the authority vested in the National Highway Traffic Safety Act and subsequent amendments. You are under no obligation to respond to this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist the NHTSA in determining whether a manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If the NHTSA proceeds with administrative enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.