DAIMLERCHRYSLER

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

06V-001
(2 pages)

January 4, 2006

Mr. Daniel Smith
Associate Administrator of Enforcement, Office of Vehicle Safety
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. Smith:

Attached is DaimlerChrysler Corporation's (DCC'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 1999-2000 model year Chrysler Cirrus, Dodge Stratus and Plymouth Breeze (JA) vehicles equipped with 2.4 liter engines. The high pressure power steering hose may prematurely heat age and develop a leak. Subsequent fluid leakage in the presence of an ignition source may result in an underhood fire.

DCC will conduct a voluntary safety recall to replace the high pressure power steering hose on the affected vehicles with a new part with increased temperature capability.

Sincerely,

Lawrence J. Sp

for Stephan J. Speth

Enclosure: Defect Information Report for DaimlerChrysler Corporation Recall E23

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

DaimlerChrysler Corporation
800 Chrysler Drive CIMS 482-00-91
Auburn Hills MI USA 48326-2757

DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT FOR DAIMLERCHRYSLER RECALL E23

Submission date: January 4, 2006

Identifying classification of vehicles potentially affected:

Make	Model	Model Years	Inclusive Dates of Manufacture	Volume	Other
Chrysler	Cirrus	1999-2000	7/1/1998 thru 7/31/2000	216,299 (estimated)	With 2.4 liter engine only
Dodge	Stratus				
Plymouth	Breeze				

Estimated percentage containing defect: unknown

Description of defect:

The high pressure power steering hose may prematurely heat age and develop a leak. Power steering fluid leakage in the presence of an ignition source may result in an underhood fire.

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

Dana Coupled Products
2910 Waterview Dr.
Rochester, MI. 48309
248-293-7300

The following chronology of principal events occurred between June and December of 2005 and led to the determination of a defect:

- In late June of 2005, NHTSA opened preliminary evaluation PE05-036 on 1999-2000 MY JA vehicles based on 27 complaints of engine compartment fires.
- In 2003 an internal investigation was conducted on Puerto Rican JA vehicles for alleged engine compartment fires. Investigation found that the fires appeared to be hot surface ignition events, possibly due to power steering fluid contact with the exhaust manifold. Engineering analysis of a 2.4L JA vehicle in Puerto Rico revealed that the power steering hose temperature could approach or slightly exceed the material specifications during certain operating conditions.
- The internal investigation was closed in September of 2004, based on a limited number of reported cases in older, high mileage Puerto Rican JA vehicles only. It was also determined that a number of these vehicles experienced a prior power steering fluid leak that was not addressed. As a precautionary measure, a new power steering hose with increased temperature capability was released at that time for JA vehicle service.
- Between July and September of 2005, an in-depth review of all JA engine compartment fire data was performed. Analysis indicated that the 1999-2000 MY 2.4 liter JA vehicle population

experienced a much greater rate of input compared to 1995-1998 MY JA vehicles, as well as versus the 2.0 and 2.5 liter engines across all model year JA vehicles.

- Although much of the subject vehicle fire data analyzed involved significant destruction of the engine compartment, some of the fires appeared to be hot surface ignition events, possibly due to power steering fluid contact with the exhaust manifold.
- Between August and October of 2005, a survey was undertaken to evaluate power steering hoses from 1999-2000 MY high mileage 2.4 liter JA vehicles. Of 31 sample hoses removed for analysis, ten showed striation cracking from heat aging of the inner liner near the crimp at the transition of the rubber hose into the steel tubing portion.
- Comparative testing of 1998 MY and 1999 MY 2.4 liter JA vehicles between October and December of 2005 revealed that the 1999 MY vehicle exhibited higher overall operating temperatures at the power steering hose, which can impact the useful life of the hose.
- Investigation also determined that the power steering hose in 2.0 liter JA applications is located a greater distance from all heat sources, including the exhaust manifold. The 2.5 liter JA power steering hose does not have a rubber component in the area of significant heat sources or the exhaust manifold.
- In November of 2005, NHTSA upgraded the investigation to engineering analysis EA05-019.
- The company is aware of 94 1999-2000 MY 2.4L JA engine compartment fires customer complaints and field reports that may be related to this condition. There is also one alleged minor injury.
- This data was presented to the Vehicle Regulations Committee on December 20th, 2005 who decided to conduct a safety recall to replace the high pressure power steering hose on the affected vehicles with a new HNBR part with increased temperature capability.

Statement of measures to be taken to correct defect:

DCC will replace the high pressure power steering hose on the affected vehicle population with a new part with increased temperature capability. DCC's scheduling information for implementing this recall is not available at this time.

DCC 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, DCC, 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.