

DAIMLERCHRYSLER

DaimlerChrysler Corporation

Stephan J. Speth

Director

Vehicle Compliance & Safety Affairs

September 6, 2006

06V-339

(3 pages)

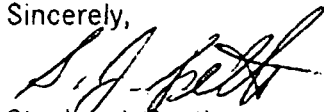
Mr. Daniel Smith
Associate Administrator of Enforcement, Office of Vehicle Safety
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

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 2001-2003 model year Dodge Durango vehicles equipped with a front bench seat. An unused center console power outlet connector may become contaminated with spilled liquids from the cup holder and develop a high resistance short, potentially causing a fire.

DCC will conduct a voluntary safety recall to inspect the connector for corrosion and cap the connector to prevent contamination.

Sincerely,



Stephan J. Speth

Enclosure: Defect Information Report for DaimlerChrysler Corporation Recall F42

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

DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT FOR DAIMLERCHRYSLER CORPORATION RECALL F42

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Submission date: September 6, 2006

Identifying classification of vehicles potentially affected:

Make	Model	Model Years	Inclusive Dates of Manufacture	Volume	Other
Dodge	Durango	2001-2003	06/01/00 through 07/01/03	35,103 (estimated)	With front bench seat only

Estimated percentage containing defect: unknown

Description of defect:

If fluid is spilled from the floor mounted cup holder in front bench seat equipped vehicles, an unused console power outlet connector located under the seat may become contaminated. This may allow development of a high resistive short circuit in the connector, which could eventually lead to a fire.

The following chronology of principal events occurred between February and August of 2006 and led to the determination of a defect:

- On February 2, 2006 NHTSA opened Preliminary Evaluation PE06-008 based on five allegations of interior fires in 2001-2003 MY Dodge Durango vehicles.
- A search of available data yielded a small number of additional vehicles with allegations that were responsive to the inquiry. This information was provided to the Agency on April 13, 2004 in response to the PE Information Request.
- Initial investigation had focused on the unused power seat wire harness in vehicles with manual seats. However, it was subsequently determined that all but one of the vehicles identified as potentially related to this investigation were equipped with the 40/20/40 split front bench seat. These vehicles were a mix of manual and power seats.
- Additionally, it was determined that the 2001-2003 MY Durango vehicles equipped with the 40/20/40 front bench seat contain an unused, uncapped connector located under the center front edge of the seat. This connector contains a fused B+ circuit that is powered with key off, a ground wire, and in a vehicle with front bucket seats would connect the vehicle wiring harness with the console power outlet. The connector is located rearward of the cup holder located on the tunnel for vehicles equipped with the front bench seat.
- On June 19, 2006 NHTSA upgraded this investigation to Engineering Analysis EA06-011 based upon the receipt of two additional allegations of interior fire in vehicles with the 40/20/40 front seat. A search of available data yielded an additional three vehicles with allegations responsive to the inquiry. All were equipped with the 40/20/40 front seat.
- Several fire analysis reports submitted to the Company indicated the presence of a sticky

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substance on the tunnel carpeting and near or in the unused console wiring connector. If this connector becomes contaminated, a high resistive short circuit can develop between the power and ground causing localized heating and potentially a vehicle fire.

- Investigation determined that the pre-2001 MY Durango vehicles did not have the subject connector since the center console on bucket seat equipped vehicles in that period of time did not have a console power outlet. For the 2004 MY, the Durango was completely redesigned and is not available with a front bench seat configuration or the subject connector and wiring.
- In summary, including the VOQ information provided to NHTSA, the Company is aware of a total of 16 vehicles with reports that may be responsive to this investigation. There have been no reports of accident or injury. However, two reports indicated that personal items in the vehicle were damaged.
- This information was presented to the Vehicle Regulations Committee on August 29, 2006 who decided to conduct a safety recall to cap the unused connector on the affected vehicle population.

Statement of measures to be taken to correct defect:

DCC will inspect the console wiring connector for corrosion, clean as required, and install a cap to prevent additional fluid from contaminating the connector. Due to the low level of input and the need for specific conditions to occur to potentially result in this condition, DCC has determined that the three day notification rule does not apply. DCC expects to initiate national notification to both dealers and to owners when a sufficient quantity of parts is available. DCC's scheduling information for implementing this recall is not available at this time.

DCC has a long-standing 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.