

DAIMLERCHRYSLER

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DaimlerChrysler Corporation

Stephan J. Speth

Director

Vehicle Compliance & Safety Affairs

October 3, 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

06V-386
(3 pages)

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 a small number of 2007 model year Dodge Durango and Chrysler Aspen vehicles. On some vehicles the right steering knuckle may have been improperly manufactured. DCC will conduct a voluntary safety recall to inspect and replace the right steering knuckle if necessary on all affected vehicles.

Sincerely,



Stephan J. Speth

Enclosure: Defect Information Report for DaimlerChrysler Corporation Recall F48

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

DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT FOR DAIMLERCHRYSLER RECALL F48

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Submission date: October 3, 2006

Identifying classification of vehicles potentially affected:

Make	Model	Model Year	Inclusive Dates of Manufacture	Vehicle Volume (estimated)
Dodge	Durango	2007	07/24/2006 - 09/01/2006	6,644
Chrysler	Aspen			

Estimated percentage containing defect: 2%

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

Metaldyne
47603 Halyard Drive
Plymouth, MI 48170
734-207-6200

Description of defect:

The right front steering knuckle may have been improperly manufactured and could break. This may cause a loss of steering control and result in a crash without warning.

The following chronology of principal events occurred during September of 2006 and led to the determination of a defect:

- On September 1, 2006 a 2007 model year Durango right front steering knuckle fractured at the tie rod connection during vehicle assembly at the Newark Assembly Plant (NAP). NAP stopped shipping vehicles and an investigation was initiated.
- The same knuckle is utilized on both the Dodge Durango and the Chrysler Aspen.
- Investigation determined that the fractured knuckle was cast by Intermet on July 18, 2006 using tool cavity # 63. Analysis determined the knuckle microstructure was non homogeneous in the area of the fracture.
- According to Intermet tooling records, cavity # 63 for the subject knuckle was shut down on July 18, 2006 due to a leaking water cooling line. The cooling line was subsequently repaired and the tool again began producing parts and continued through July 19, 2006.
- It was subsequently determined that water in the die eroded the mold coating in the steering boss area generating incorrect fill characteristics and tool temperature. The compromise of coating and inconsistent tool temperature caused all cavity # 63 parts beyond the water line repair to be suspect for a cold shut condition.
- Cavity #63 was removed from production on July 19, 2006 and subsequently decommissioned

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on August 11, 2006 during normal tool rotation as it had achieved its planned service life.

- Internet recreated a cold shut condition by spraying water on the tool, simulating a fractured water line, and also manufactured parts with a localized tool cold spot and no tool coating to verify root cause.
- 100 cavity #63 knuckles manufactured between July 11, 2006 and August 11, 2006 were sectioned and analyzed. All suspect parts were contained to the July 18 and 19, 2006 manufacture dates.
- A review of production records indicated that 265 cavity #63 knuckles were manufactured during the suspect two day period. 109 have been contained and the remaining 156 were placed into vehicle production.
- NAP inspected all held vehicles and released those with knuckles outside the suspect window.
- There are no reports of accidents, injuries or property damage related to this condition.
- This data was presented to the Vehicle Regulations Committee on September 26, 2006 who decided to conduct a voluntary safety recall to inspect and replace the right steering knuckle if necessary on all affected vehicles.

Statement of measures to be taken to correct defect:

DCC will conduct a safety recall to inspect and replace the right steering knuckle manufactured from casting cavity # 63 on July 18 and 19, 2006 on all affected vehicles. Due to the lack of any known accidents, injuries or property damage, DCC has concluded that the three day dealer notification rule does not apply. DCC expects to initiate national notification to dealers and owners in October of 2006.

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.