



Received
July 3, 2007
Recall Magement Division

07V-289

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Manager
Compliance and Regulatory Affairs

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June 27, 2007

Dan Smith
Associate Administrator for Vehicle Safety
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Defect Information Report FL-503, Douglas AutoTec Steer Column missing welds

Mr. Smith:

In accordance with Part 573 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Freightliner LLC herewith reports a safety campaign to recall approximately 28,000 Freightliner, and Thomas Built Buses vehicles manufactured November 23, 2004 to March 21, 2006 with a defect (missing welds) in the steering column assembly.

Attached is Freightliner's Defect Information Report.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,


Nasser Zamani

Cc: Michael Mason, CAL-OSHA

Enclosure

Certified Mail# 7003 2260 0001 3403 4933

Defect Information Report
(Section 573.6)

June 27, 2007

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

Brands: Freightliner and Thomas Built Buses

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

Model(s) affected:

Freightliner: Columbia, Century ST and Coronado

Thomas Built Buses: Saf-T-liner FS-65 School Bus

Model Years affected: Trucks: 2005 to 2006, Buses 2004 to 2006

Manufacture Dates: October 23, 2004 to March 21, 2006 (Certain Vehicles)

Basis for determining population: All vehicles with Douglas AutoTec (DAC) steering columns. Affected column manufacturing dates provided by DAC were matched to VINs using Freightliner production records.

Component manufacturer if other than the vehicle manufacturer:

Douglas AutoTec Corp. (DAC)
300 Albers Road
Bronson, Michigan 49028

(c)(3) **Total number of vehicles potentially affected:** Approximately 26,006 Trucks and 2053 Buses

(c)(4) **Percentage of vehicles estimated to contain the defect:** less than 1%

(c)(5) **Description of the defect:** During the steering column manufacturing process two welds may have been missed. **49CFR Section 577.5(f) Evaluation of the risk to motor vehicle safety:** Columns with two welds missing may fatigue, fracture, lead to a potential loss of steering control and crash without warning.

(c)(6) **Chronology of principal events:** January 2006, a field report of a failed column with missing welds was received. Freightliner Field Service began investigating the issue. March 2006 DAC modified their production procedures to eliminate the potential for missing a weld station. October 2006 Freightliner and DAC conduct testing to evaluate the impact of a failed column (neither were able to duplicate a situation that induces bind.)

(c)(7) **Noncompliance-test or other data:** not applicable

(c)(8) **Remedial program:** Inspections and repairs will be performed by Freightliner dealerships and Direct Warranty customers, i.e., customers approved by Freightliner to do their own warranty repairs. Any columns with missing welds will be replaced. Dealer notifications will be posted August 24, 2007.

Estimated Owner Notification Date: Customer notification will be by first class mail using Freightliner records to determine the customers affected. This will be completed approximately August 24, 2007.

Reimbursement Plan: All prior repairs, if any, would have been completed 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-503