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April 7, 2009

APR 8 2009  
NHTSA

Mr. Daniel C. Smith  
Associate Administrator for Enforcement  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
West Building, Fourth Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20590



Dear Mr. Smith:

Attached is Chrysler LLC's ("Chrysler") 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 2002-2003 model year Jeep Liberty vehicles. The front suspension upper control arm ball joint may experience a loss of lubrication which can lead to corrosion, accelerated wear, and possible separation while driving.

Chrysler will conduct a safety recall to replace the front upper control arm assemblies on all affected vehicles.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lawrence J. Sak".

Lawrence J. Sak

Enclosure: Defect Information Report for Chrysler Recall J17

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

# DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT FOR CHRYSLER LLC RECALL J17

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**Submission date:** April 7, 2009

## Identifying classification of vehicles potentially affected:

Make	Model	Model Year	Inclusive Dates of Manufacture	Volume	Other
Jeep	Liberty	2002-2003	May 1 – September 30, 2002	42,469 (estimated)	In salt belt states (plus West Virginia)

**Estimated percentage containing defect:** unknown

## Description of defect:

The front suspension upper control arm ball joint may experience a loss of lubrication which can lead to corrosion, accelerated wear, and possible separation while driving.

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

TRW Automotive  
12025 Tech Center Drive  
Livonia, MI 48150  
(734) 855-2600

## The following chronology of principal events led to the determination of a defect:

- On December 17, 2007 NHTSA opened Preliminary Evaluation PE07-062 for the 2002 - 2003 model year Jeep Liberty based on a small number of complaints of front suspension upper ball joint separation while driving.
- On April 15, 2008 NHTSA upgraded to Engineering Analysis EA08-008 while Chrysler continued investigation.
- A significant number of Jeep Liberty front upper control arm assemblies were removed from Chrysler employee vehicles for analysis. A small number of these showed evidence of ball joint seal damage.
- Current field data indicates approximately 100 potentially responsive separations involving the EA subject vehicle population. Some of these complaints allege the separation occurred at higher speed or while turning in traffic.
- The vast majority of these alleged separations occurred in salt belt states. A review of some returned parts indicated compromised sealing, loss of lubrication which resulted in corrosion, accelerated wear and separation.
- Analysis of these potentially responsive separations by vehicle build date shows a clearly defined and significant increase in the rate of separation during the late May through early

## DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT FOR CHRYSLER LLC RECALL J17

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September of 2002 vehicle build window for vehicles originally sold in or currently registered in salt belt states (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, the District of Columbia, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Missouri) and West Virginia.

- No root cause for this increase in the rate of separation during this five month build window in 2002 has been determined. There are no other periods of time or other vehicles with any significant input.
- Chrysler is aware of one injury that occurred during a crash that may be related to this issue.
- This data was presented on March 31, 2009 to the Vehicle Regulations Committee who decided to conduct a safety recall.

### **Statement of measures to be taken to correct defect:**

Chrysler will conduct a safety recall to replace the front upper control arm assemblies on all affected vehicles. Chrysler expects to initiate national notification to both dealers and owners when a sufficient quantity of parts is available. Chrysler's schedule for implementing this recall is not available at this time.

Chrysler 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, Chrysler, 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.