



Associate Administrator for Enforcement
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

October 13, 2011

ATTENTION: Safety Recall Administrator

The following information is submitted in accordance with the requirements of 49 CFR Part 573.6 as it applies to a possible defect relating to motor vehicle safety.

573.6(c)(1)
American LaFrance, LLC (ALF)
1090 Newton Way
Summerville, SC 29483-7430

573.6(c)(2)
This notice covers certain American LaFrance Eagle fire trucks that have been fitted with a certain Meritor WABCO Pneumatic Electronic Stability Control (ESC) System.

573.6(c)(3)
The number of affected vehicles is seventeen (17). Fifteen (15) vehicles have been shipped and two are still in production. The serial number range is between 1A0738 and 1A0933 with manufacturing dates between October 21, 2010 and August 25, 2011.

573.6(c)(4)
Percentage of vehicles expected to contain the suspected condition is 100%.

573.6(c)(5) **Description of Potential Defect:**

Under certain unique road and driving conditions involving tight, successive, highly banked curves in opposite directions, vehicle body roll and road inclination characteristics may adversely affect the slip angle calculation by the ESC Module. This may cause the ESC system to perceive an oversteering situation and therefore apply the front axle outer wheel service brake until the vehicle is perceived to be stable by the ESC system. This unnecessary brake intervention may pull the vehicle out of the curve, requiring the driver to counter steer to keep the vehicle on its intended path. If the driver is slow to react during this described unnecessary ESC intervention, the vehicle may deviate from its intended path. All known occurrences of this described condition have occurred on tight, S-type curves that are highly banked above 6 degrees. The faster the vehicle is driven on this unique road condition, the tighter the curves and the higher the bank, the more likely the occurrence of unnecessary over steer brake activation by the ESC System.

573.6 (c)(6) **Chronology**

- 7/05/2011 Ventura County contacted American LaFrance Customer Service advising that one of their fire trucks abruptly lurched to the left pulling the steering wheel from the driver's grip sending the truck over the double yellow line in the middle of the road.
- 7/08/2011 American LaFrance Customer Service opened an Ontrac Ticket with Meritor WABCO and asked for technical assistance in solving this issue.
- 7/11/2011 ALF sent a technician to reproduce problem and could not. Under advisement from Meritor WABCO the technician spent the rest of week recalibrating the ESC units on the four fire trucks operating from that fire station hoping this would solve the issue.
- 8/15/2011 Ventura County contacted American LaFrance Customer Service advising of another incident and demanded that the ESC systems be disconnected. ALF contacted Meritor WABCO and were given instructions of how to disable the ESC and how to download data from EEPROM in the Wabco ESC ECU.
- 8/16/2011 Data was downloaded from the ESC EEPROM and the ESC units were disconnected. Data from the ESC ECU was sent to Meritor Wabco. ALF requested Meritor Wabco on-site assistance.
- 8/22/2011 A Meritor Wabco Service Engineer along with ALF and Ventura technicians recorded data on the four suspect trucks trying to duplicate the incidents and Meritor WABCO identified at least one false incident.
- 9/08/2011 Discussion between Meritor WABCO, Ventura FD & ALF to discuss action plans, responsibilities and timelines. Based on Meritor WABCO analysis of the traces taken on the ALF vehicles at Ventura, it has been determined that two of the interventions measured are very likely the same issue/root cause as experienced on Freightliner trucks on Highway 41.
- 9/30/2011 Meritor WABCO submitted 573.6 Defect Information Report to NHTSA declaring their intent to replace current ESC modules with their new ESC5 module.

573.6(c)(7)

Not applicable.

573.6(c)(8)

American LaFrance will initiate a voluntary owner notification and recall of all seventeen (17) vehicles that the company has manufactured using this style of Meritor Wabco ESC module.

American LaFrance believes this issue has gone undetected to these vehicle owners and therefore no pre-notification repairs would have been made at the expense of the owner.

The number which American LaFrance has assigned to this investigation for tracking purposes is **ALF -0111**.

Very Truly Yours
AMERICAN LAFRANCE, LLC

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stan R. Gornick". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "S" and "G".

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