

**Part 573 Safety Recall Report****15V-708****Manufacturer Name :** Fontaine Trailer Company**Submission Date :** OCT 23,2015**NHTSA Recall No. :** 15V-708**Manufacturer Recall No. :** Slider Enhancement**Manufacturer Information :**

Manufacturer Name : Fontaine Trailer Company

Address : 430 Letson Industrial Road

Haleyville AL 35565

Company phone : 2054851375

**Population :**

Number of potentially involved : 552

Estimated percentage with defect : 100

**Vehicle Information :**

Vehicle : 2014-2016 Fontaine Revolution Flat

Vehicle Type : TRAILERS

Body Style : OTHER

Power Train : NR

Descriptive Information : Structural Member enhancement on a vendor supplied single axle slider assembly installed in a Fontaine Revolution semi-trailer. Affected Semi Trailers include Revolution model flatbeds equipped with either a single or combination of two single axle slider suspension assemblies.

Production Dates : SEP 30, 2013 - SEP 28, 2015

**VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) Range**

Begin : 13N1532CXE1566632

End : 13N1532C1G1518584

 Not sequential VINs**Description of Defect :**

Description of the Defect : The structural member (a single 3" C-Channel) and respective weldments providing lateral support between Frame Hangers on the Revolution Flat model single axle slider provided by Fontaine's suspension vendor may be insufficient for the trailers anticipated life. Cracks can develop in the weldments attaching the structural member to the frame hangers and subsequently propagate into the structural member resulting total separation of the structural member from the frame hanger (s).

FMVSS 1 : NR

FMVSS 2 : NR

Description of the Safety Risk : Crack initiation and subsequent propagation of the cracks into the structural member can result in the structural member becoming unattached from the vehicle. Failure of the structural member between the two frame hangers of the slider allows the hangers to load independent of each other during the side

drag turn events and can lead to a more severe failure of the slider box assembly increasing the risk of a crash.

Description of the Cause : Load inputs associated with repeated vehicle side drag turn events such as sharp turns can create stress loads in the weldments attaching the structural member to the frame hangers. The stress in the weldments can be amplified by several factors such as the amount of load on the trailer or service environment. These resulting stress levels, if high enough, can result in the development of fatigue cracks in the weldments which are subject to propagate into the parent metal of the structural member. Subsequent separation of the structural member from the hangers can result if cracks go un-noticed or not repaired in a timely manner.

Identification of Any Warning that can Occur : Cracks that develop in the structural member to frame hanger weldments are located such that visual observation is a possibility. Likewise, progression of the cracks into the structural member or separation of the structural member from the slider frame hangers increases the probability for visual detection that repairs are imminently needed.

#### Supplier Identification :

##### Component Manufacturer

Name : Hutchens Industries

Address : 215 North Patterson Ave  
Springfield MISSOURI 65802

Country : United States

#### Chronology :

The Warranty Administrator at Fontaine was contacted on 8/26/15 by a fleet owner operating a Revolution Flat equipped with a rear axle slide suspension regarding a structural failure of the slider assembly. A joint site visit with the vendor of the slider assembly occurred on 9/15/15 to review the assembly with the reported failure. It was noted that the structural member between the hangers was missing. Small cracks were observed in the weldments on a second trailer reviewed during the site visit. The first trailer was returned to Fontaine for further evaluation on 9/22/15 by being piggy backed on a sister trailer. The sister trailer was observed to have cracks in the structural member located between the frame hangers on this trailer. These cracks have only been observed on two trailers and Fontaine is not aware of any accidents or injuries as a result of these cracks.

While these cracks had not caused separation of the structural member from the frame hangers, it is believed that continued use without structural enhancement could result in separation of the structural member from the frame hangers. A determination was made by Fontaine and their suspension supplier on 10/14/15 that enhancements should be made to affected trailers in the field. All slider assemblies installed starting on 9/28/15 included structural enhancements to the design to prevent cracking of the structural member. The units observed with cracks were from a group of the first trailers of this model built that were equipped with the single axle slider assembly.

During inspection of the trailers, a secondary crack was observed at the rear inside corner of the hanger attachment to the slider zee rail. This crack is not considered a safety related concern, however, it will be repaired if present and the area will be enhanced with additional support gussets on all units.

**Description of Remedy :**

Description of Remedy Program : The dealer body and each owner will be notified of the subject safety recall (pursuant to the included DRAFT –Owner Notification Letter).

Arrangements will be made with all customers to identify repair facilities that are suitable to their operating locale. Enhancement instructions and required enhancement parts will be provided to each location doing the repair. All parts and agreed to labor will be at no cost to the dealer body or owner.

How Remedy Component Differs from Recalled Component : Inspection of the structural member will be required to determine the course of action that will be implemented to complete the enhancement. If the existing 3” tall structural “C” channel member is intact, any small cracks (2” in length or less) will be repaired and a 6 inch tall “C” channel structural member will be added per enhancement instructions. If the existing 3 inch structural member is not repairable, it will be removed and replaced by the 6 inch member.

Identify How/When Recall Condition was Corrected in Production : The 3 inch “C” Channel member was replaced by a 6 inch “C” Channel which provides more rigidity and strength to the structural support between the frame Hangers. The taller “C” Channel reduces the stress levels in the critical weldment locations.

The secondary crack observed at the rear corner of the Hanger to Zee rail attachment was addressed using a thicker support plate and longer welds to provide more strength and weld area. These enhancements were included on all single axle sliders used on the Revolution products beginning with units installed on 9/28/2015.

**Recall Schedule :**

Description of Recall Schedule : Trailers still located on the Fontaine yard will be updated beginning 10/26/2015. Dealer notification and customer notification will commence with the approval of the notification letters

Planned Dealer Notification Date : NOV 02, 2015 - NOV 16, 2015

Planned Owner Notification Date : NOV 09, 2015 - DEC 22, 2015

\* NR - Not Reported