

ACU Unlocked Sprinter 573 Chronology (too many characters for the recall portal comment box)

Chronology:

In July 2018, Daimler began production of its new Sprinter platform, the VS30. In May 2019, Daimler was initially made aware that some vehicles had left the US production facility with an “unlocked” Airbag Control Unit (ACU). On May 13, 2019, Daimler issued a bulletin which informed that upon diagnosing a specific fault code, the ACU should be locked. In June 2019, the agency raised questions about the bulletin and the company began to consider the underlying issue further.

Initially, it appeared that the unlocked ACU condition was occurring in upfitted vehicles. In vehicles that are upfitted, the ACU will often need to be unlocked to ensure that the supplemental restraint system does not deploy during the upfit process. However, upon closer review, it was found that the ACU was inadvertently not being locked in some cases upon reassembly at the US production plant. When Sprinter cargo vans are manufactured in Germany the ACU is in a “locked” state which means that the ACU is active. When the vans are received at Daimler’s Charleston, South Carolina facility, the ACU has to be “unlocked” in order to prevent accidentally triggering the system during the reassembly process. The ACU is to then again be locked and reactivated at the end of the line.

All Daimler Vans dealers have a comprehensive Pre-Delivery Inspection (PDI) process which includes a requirement to check the status of the supplemental restraint system and any warning lamps displaying in the instrument cluster. It was found during the dealer PDI process that there were a small overall number of instances where vehicles had an unlocked ACU and those vehicles with the condition were identified and corrected.

In early July 2019, a process improvement was put into place at the Charleston facility where the status of the ACU and software is automatically checked at the end of the line. In addition, all vehicles in the marshalling yard produced before this process improvement was introduced were manually checked to ensure that the ACU remained in a locked status. The manual recheck, which was carried out because of the investigation was completed in August 2019.

Daimler continued to communicate with the agency and provide updates on the status of its investigation throughout the Summer, with several updates provided in August 2019 and on September 6, 2019.

On September 25, 2019, after ongoing discussion with the agency, Daimler AG determined that a potential safety risk cannot be ruled out and decided to initiate a recall campaign for the vehicles.

To date, Daimler is not aware of any accidents or injuries related to this condition.