



99V-181.002 (61)

Gary W. Rossow  
Director  
Government Technical Affairs

July 22, 1999

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National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
400 Seventh St., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

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DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

Attn: Jonathan D. White

Subject: Information Report

In accordance with Title 49, Part 573, Freightliner Corporation herewith submits an information report for a new recall campaign to recall Freightliner and Sterling trucks for a defect in vehicles equipped with certain Caterpillar engines, EATON Auto Shift transmissions, and an Auto Retarder in Cruise option. This recall is being conducted by Caterpillar. Freightliner is submitting this report to conform with the specific requirements of Part 573.3(f).

Sincerely,

Gary W. Rossow

Cc: Michael Mason, CAL-OSHA  
Thomas S. Lana, Caterpillar Inc.

Certified Mail No P335 662 635

**Section 573.5 Defect Information Report**

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Date: July 22, 1999

**(c) (1) Manufacturer:** FREIGHTLINER CORPORATION  
P.O. BOX 3849  
Portland, Oregon 97208  
(503) 735-8078

**(c) (2) Vehicle identification:**

(ii) Model(s) Affected: Freightliner FLC, FLD, and FLN, Sterling L-Line

Manufacture Dates: 12/22/98 through 7/16/99

Basis for Determining Population: The beginning date is when the first vehicle was built and the ending date is when manufacturing began disabling the Auto Retarder in Cruise option.

(iv) Component manufacturer if other than the vehicle manufacturer:  
Caterpillar Inc.

**(c) (3) Total Number of Vehicles Potentially Affected:** Approximately 320

**(c) (4) Percentage of Vehicles Estimated to Contain the Defect:** Approximately 30%

**(c) (5) Description of the Defect:** This recall affects vehicles manufactured with Caterpillar engines, EATON Auto Shift transmissions and an Auto Retarder in Cruise option. If the driver initiates a downshift when the cruise control is being used and the Auto Retarder in Cruise is on, the retarder may stall the engine when the transmission shifts into neutral without prior warning.

**(c) (6) Chronology of Principal Events:** On June 30, 1999 Caterpillar notified Freightliner of a problem with the programming of the Electronic Control Module (ECM) and requested owner information on all vehicles built with certain Caterpillar engines, EATON Auto Shift transmissions and the Auto Retarder in Cruise option. Owners were to be notified by Caterpillar of this problem and arrange for their vehicle(s) to be modified.

On July 13, 1999, Caterpillar provided Freightliner with more detailed information and their intended actions.

On July 19, 1999, Caterpillar informed Freightliner that Caterpillar had decided to conduct a recall and notify NHTSA and Customers in accordance with Part 573.5.

**(c) (7) Noncompliance Test Data:** N/A

**(c) (8)(I) Remedial Program:** Repairs for this recall campaign will be performed by Caterpillar distributors.

Caterpillar will notify customers and dealers by first class mail using Freightliner records to determine the customers affected. This will be completed as soon as possible.

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**(ii) Estimated Owner Notification Date:** To be determined by Caterpillar.

Remedy: Customers will initially be requested to have the Auto Retarder in Cruise disabled. When new software is available, the electronic engines will be reprogrammed to eliminate the problem.

**(c) (9) Communications Sent to Dealers and Owners:** Dealer and Owner notifications will be submitted by Caterpillar as soon as available.

**(c) (10) Copy of Proposed Owner Notification Letter:** The letter will be submitted for approval by Caterpillar as soon as possible.

**(c) (11) Vehicle Manufacturer's Campaign Number:** N/A