



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE.  
Washington, DC 20590

NOV - 6 2009

Mr. Clarence M. Ditlow  
Executive Director  
Center for Auto Safety  
1825 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Suite 330  
Washington, D.C. 20009-5708

NVS-2121lh  
DP09-005

Dear Mr. Ditlow:

This letter acknowledges receipt of your petition received by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Office of Defects Investigation on October 13, 2009, to open a defect investigation into fuel tank fire hazards on Model Years 1993 – 2004 Jeep Grand Cherokee vehicles. Your petition has been assigned the identification number DP09-005. A copy of the opening resume denoting receipt of the petition is enclosed for your information.

In accordance with Title 49 CFR Part 552, "Petitions for Rulemaking, Defects, and Noncompliance Orders," the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration will conduct a review of the petition and other pertinent information and will notify you further upon completion.

Sincerely,

Kathleen C. DeMeter, Director  
Office of Defects Investigation  
Vehicle Safety

Enclosure: DP09-005 Open Resume

cc:  
Steve Chan





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# ODI RESUME

Investigation: DP09-005  
Prompted By: Defect Petition  
Date Opened: 11/06/2009  
Principal Investigator: Lawrence Hershman  
Subject: Crash Related Fuel Tank Fire/Leak

Manufacturer: Chrysler LLC  
Products: Model Years 1993-2004 Jeep Grand Cherokee  
Population: 3,037,000 (estimated)

Problem Description: Fuel tank presents fire hazard in crashes.

## FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	12	0	0
Crashes/Fires:	12	0	0
Injury Incidents:	5	0	0
# Injuries:	9	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	1	0	0
# Fatalities:	1	0	0
Other:	0	0	0

Description of Other:

Action: A Defect Petition (DP) has been opened.

Engineer: Lawrence L. Hershman LH

Date: 11/06/2009

Div. Chief: D. Scott Von

Date: 11/06/2009

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 11/06/2009

Summary:

In a letter dated October 2, 2009, the Center for Auto Safety (CAS) petitioned NHTSA to open a Defect Investigation and recall Model Year 1993-2004 Jeep Grand Cherokees. CAS alleges that the subject vehicles have defective fuel tank storage systems that present fire hazards in crashes.

CAS alleges that the plastic fuel tank is subject to degradation and rupture. CAS alleges that the tank's placement behind the rear axle and below the rear bumper and the lack of adequate shielding makes it more vulnerable during crashes to impacts from other vehicles, vehicle components from the Grand Cherokee itself, or, in the case of rollover crashes, from other objects. CAS also alleges that the fuel filler neck tears off in crashes.

ODI has identified 12 Vehicle Owner Questionnaires (VOQs) for Model Year 1993-2004 Jeep Grand Cherokees reporting a vehicle crash that allegedly involved either a fuel tank leak and/or a fire potentially related to a fuel tank leak. Of the 12 VOQs, 10 involved fires and two involved fuel leaks without fire.

ODI has opened a Defect Petition to assess whether there is evidence to support opening a Safety Defect Investigation concerning the alleged defects in the subject vehicles.