



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

# ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE09-040  
Date Opened: 08/31/2009  
Principal Investigator: Bruce York-B  
Subject: Rack and Pinion Failure

Manufacturer: Daimler Trucks North America, Freightliner, LCC  
Products: 2008-2009 Freightliner Century, Cascadia and Columbia Trucks  
Population: 38,505 (estimated)

Problem Description: Internal failure in the rack and pinion leads to a loss of steering.

## FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	1	0	1
Crashes/Fires:	2	CONFIDENTIAL	CONFIDENTIAL
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
# Injuries:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other:	0	CONFIDENTIAL	CONFIDENTIAL

Description of Other: Some Field Reports Indicates Crashes

Action: A Preliminary Evaluation has been opened.

Engineer: Bruce York  
Div. Chief: Richard Boyd MB  
Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

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### Summary:

A consumer complaint was filed with the agency on August 22, 2009, by an independent contractor leasing a 2009 Freightliner Cascadia. The complaint alleges that in April of this year at approximately 50,000 miles he experienced a seal rupture in the rack and pinion assembly. A new seal was installed and at 56,000 miles he found his right steer tire completely bald. The repair shop identified an internal failure of the rack and pinion assembly causing the rapid wear of the tire. A new rack and pinion was not available for the repair as they were allegedly on national back order.

ODI has identified field reports related to failed rack and pinions on the subject vehicles. The reports identify either an internal failure of the rack and pinion assembly that resulted in crashes or a looseness of the inner tie rod end of the rack and pinion resulting in a poor alignment and premature tire wear.

A Preliminary Evaluation has been opened to determine the cause of the rack and pinion failures and the potential safety consequences that the failures present.