

DAIMLERCHRYSLER

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OFFICE DaimlerChrysler Corporation
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

November 4, 1999

Mr. Kenneth N. Weinstein
Associate Administrator, Safety Assurance
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

99V-313 (01)

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

In accordance with the provisions of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966 and 49 CFR Part 573, Defect and Noncompliance Reports, DaimlerChrysler Corporation herewith furnishes the Defect Information Report which contains details of a recall regarding a potential safety related deficiency in some 1999 model year vehicles. The potential for inadequate frame strength exists on some of the affected vehicles.

DaimlerChrysler will formalize the recall requirements and instructions to dealers in the near future. Copies will be provided to the NHTSA when available, and Vehicle Identification Number range and assembly plant information for the involved vehicles will also be furnished at that time.

Sincerely,



cc: Susan M. Cischke
Senior Vice President -
Regulatory Affairs and Passenger Car Operations

Enclosures: Defect Information Report for DaimlerChrysler Recall # 855

cc: K.C. DeMater, NHTSA
Division of Occupational Safety & Health
California Department of Industrial Relations

DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT FOR DAIMLERCHRYSLER RECALL # 855

November 4, 1999

Page 1

99V- 313 (02)

Submission date: November 4, 1999

Identifying classification of vehicles potentially affected:

<u>Make</u>	<u>Model</u>	<u>Model Year</u>	<u>Inclusive Dates of Manufacture</u>	<u>Volume</u>
Plymouth	Prowler	1999	May 11, 1999 through August 20, 1999	542

Estimated percentage containing defect: 11%

Description of defect:

Some aluminum castings used in the manufacture of the vehicle frame may have missed the required heat treatment operation resulting in soft frame castings. Soft frame castings may fracture under expected vehicle operation conditions. If a casting were to fracture, it could compromise vehicle handling or result in a loss of vehicle control which could increase the risk of an accident.

The name, address and telephone number of the supplier who manufactured the subject components:

Automotive Structures Inc.
A Division of Alcoa
8001 Murphy Way
Northwood, Ohio 43619
Roger Pinkleman

(419) 661-6200

The following chronology of principal events led to the determination of a defect:

- An aluminum frame casting was observed bending at the DaimlerChrysler assembly plant when an operator was tightening a bolt in mid-May 1999. Based on this report, an investigation with the supplier was initiated. The investigation revealed the following:
 - The supplier discovered that some frame sub-component castings that had not been through the heat treatment operation may have been inadvertently mixed with

DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT FOR DAIMLERCHRYSLER RECALL # 855

November 4, 1999

Page 2

99V- 313 (13)

properly heat treated parts during a finished part repackaging operation at a sub-supplier.

- It was determined that any of eight different frame sub-component castings may have missed the heat treatment operation.
- Inspection of 156 vehicles at the assembly plant identified 21 vehicles with at least one soft sub-component frame casting. Inspection of 80 frame assemblies identified 5 soft sub-component frame castings, and sorting of 4,468 unassembled frame castings identified 2 soft castings.
- Supplier shipping records indicate that 63 soft frame castings remain unaccounted for.
- A vehicle test was conducted that determined the soft castings could fracture during expected vehicle use.
- DaimlerChrysler is unaware of any customer complaints associated with this issue.
- This issue was presented to the Vehicle Regulations Committee in late October 1999 and a safety recall was approved.

Statement of measures to be taken to correct defect:

All involved vehicles will be inspected for soft sub-component frame castings using Eddy current equipment. Dealers and owners of vehicles found to have soft frame sub-components will be offered a replacement vehicle. DaimlerChrysler expects to begin national dealer notification in December 1999 and owner notification thereafter.