

DAIMLERCHRYSLER

DaimlerChrysler Corporation
Matthew C. Reynolds
Director
Vehicle Compliance & Safety Affairs

May 10, 2000

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

00V-135 (01)

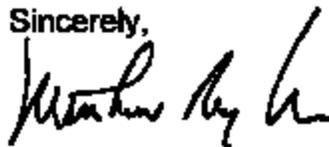
Dear Mr. Weinstein:

Attached is DaimlerChrysler's Defect Information Report submitted in accordance with 49 CFR Part 573. The report contains details of a recall regarding a potential safety related defect in some 1994 through 1996 model year Ram Trucks. The affected vehicles were built with ignition switches and wiring that may overheat.

This condition is the subject of NHTSA inquiries PE99-031 and EA99-027, which are resolved by the herein described voluntary recall action on the part of DaimlerChrysler.

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,



Matthew C Reynolds

Enclosure: Defect Information Report for DaimlerChrysler Recall # 875

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

DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT FOR DAIMLERCHRYSLER RECALL # 875

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00V-135 (02)

Submission date: May 10, 2000**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>
Dodge	Ram Pickup	1994 through 1996	Early June, 1993 through Mid April, 1996	690,000 (est.)

Estimated percentage containing defect: unknown

Description of defect: The affected vehicles were built with an ignition switch and wiring that may overheat under certain operating conditions. High electrical current loads pass through the switch when the blower motor is operated on high for an extended period of time. This excessive current load can cause the ignition switch and wiring to overheat.

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

- This issue is the topic of NHTSA investigation EA99-027, opened September of 1999.
- DaimlerChrysler is aware of 317 complaints and 38 reports of vehicle fires, which appear to be related to ignition switch and wiring overheating.
- The electrical circuitry routes the blower motor current through the ignition switch. When the blower motor is operated on "high", it draws approximately 27 amps of current, which is the highest current load of any circuit in the ignition switch.
- Engineering has found that overheating of the ignition switch is related to heat generated internally in the switch due to current load and further compounded by the unique packaging and application requirements of the BR vehicles. Notably lack of air movement within the steering column where the switch is mounted and function and size of the blower motor.
- As a running 1996 MY change, installation of a relay was implemented at the affected assembly plants to remove the HVAC blower motor current from passing through the ignition switch.
- Analysis of customer complaints and warranty claims indicates overheating typically occurs in the summer months which is consistent with running AC at high blower motor speeds for extended periods.
- A search of records for similar incidents for vehicles built after the implementation of the relay used to isolate the blower current from the ignition switch, found no owner complaints and no fire reports.
- This information was presented to the Vehicle Regulations Committee where it was decided that

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a safety recall should be conducted to resolve this issue.

Statement of measures to be taken to correct defect:

A safety recall will be conducted on the affected vehicles to install a relay and overlay harness. Additionally the ignition switch and wiring will be inspected for damage and replaced as necessary. A supply of the necessary replacement parts is being procured and the information required for implementation is being prepared. DaimlerChrysler expects to implement parts distribution and national notification to both dealers and owners in June 2000.