



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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: EA 03-013
Prompted By: PE 03-015
Date Opened: 08/13/2003 Date Closed: 03/11/2004
Principal Investigator: John Abbott
Subject: Engine Cooling Fan Blade Failure

Manufacturer: Winnebago Industries, Inc.
Products: 1996 Through 2003 Winnebago Rialta on VW Eurovan Chassis
Population: 7,734

Problem Description: Separation of the Blades from the Engine's Electronic Cooling Fan.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	8	172	180
Crashes/Fires:	0	0	0
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
# Injuries:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	36	36

*Description of Other: Eurovan Vehicles

Action: Close investigation. VW is conducting a safety recall. (No. 04V-107)

Engineer: John Abbott

Date: 03/11/2004

Div. Chief: Thomas Z. Cooper

Date: 03/11/2004

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 03/11/2004

Summary: The subject vehicles are equipped with two electronic cooling fans located in the engine compartment immediately behind the engine radiator. The Rialta motorhome is built on a VW Eurovan incomplete chassis and shares the same engine and engine cooling fans as the Eurovan. Data indicates that the cooling fan blades fail predominately on Rialta vehicles in model years (MY) 1998 through 2000. These vehicles account for 77 percent of the warranty, field and consumer reports for all MY 1996-2003 Rialta vehicles. Although the Eurovan has the same cooling fans as the Rialta, it accounts for only 17 percent of the total Eurovan and Rialta reports. In its February 11, 2004 defect report, VW stated, "the affected Winnebago Rialta vehicles differ from Volkswagen Eurovan vehicles that use the same component due to a substantially increased duty cycle of the cooling fan and service methods that may affect the cooling fan." Rialta vehicles are larger and approximately 1,700 pounds heavier than Eurovan vehicles, and therefore the cooling fan can see increased duty cycles in severe operating conditions such as driving in high ambient temperatures or in steep mountainous areas. Accordingly, VW will conduct a safety recall on the 1998-2000 Rialta population to replace the cooling fans. The cooling fans in MY 1996 and 1997 are a different design with a smaller fan motor and blade. In model year 2001 the engine size was increased from 140 hp to 204 hp in both vehicles. The larger engine reduces the duty cycle of the cooling fan in severe operating conditions. VW will also send to owners a warning label to affix to all Rialta and Eurovan vehicles. The label advises technicians to be careful not to apply force on the cooling fans while servicing these vehicles.

VW will recall 2,563 MY 1998-2000 Rialta vehicles. ODI is aware of a total of 138 warranty, field and consumer reports for these vehicles. The recall is identified by NHTSA number 04V-107.

John Abbott