

# DAIMLERCHRYSLER

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

May 11, 2001

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

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

Reference: NHTSA Identification Number 00V-421.002

Enclosed are representative copies of communications relating to the 1995 through 2000 model year vehicles involved in the referenced recall. DaimlerChrysler expects to begin owner notification during the week of May 21, 2001. The exact number of vehicles in the recall is 275,438 (1995 through 1997 – The Polk Company currently registered and 1998 through 2000 – manufactured).

The involved Vehicle Identification Number range is:

<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>
SE000241	SE247793
TE000101	TE432488
VE000073	VE199049
WE000086	WE155980
XE000305	XE159700
YE000802	YE118717

(VIN last eight characters) - S = 1995 model year; T = 1996 model year; V = 1997 model year; W = 1998 model year; X = 1999 model year; Y = 2000 model year; E = MMMA Assembly Plant, Bloomington, Illinois; and the last six digits = sequential number.

This completes DaimlerChrysler's package of information for this recall as required by the Defects Report Regulation.

Sincerely,



For: M. C. Reynolds

Enclosure: Recall #967

cc: K. C. DeMeter

DaimlerChrysler Corporation  
900 Chrysler Drive C1M8 482-00-91  
Auburn Hills MI USA 48326-2757  
Phone 248.512.4188  
Fax 248.576.7321  
e-mail: mcr1@daimlerchrysler.com

# DAIMLERCHRYSLER

May 2001

Dealer Service Instructions for:

## **Safety Recall No. 967**

### **Lower Lateral Arm Ball Joint Boots**

**Effective immediately, this recall (No. 967) cancels and supersedes Recall No. 827 – Lower Lateral Arm Ball Joint Boots. Please remove and discard from your files all copies of Safety Recall No. 827 (dated July 1999). The service procedures in recall No. 967 has been revised and 1997 through 2000 model year vehicles have been added to the vehicles involved in this recall.**

#### **Models**

1995-2000 (FJ) Dodge Avenger and Chrysler Sebring Coupe

1995-1998 (FJ) Eagle Talon

**IMPORTANT:** Some of the involved vehicles may be in dealer used vehicle inventory. Dealers should complete this recall service on these vehicles before retail delivery. Dealers should also perform this recall on vehicles in for service. Involved vehicles can be determined by using the DIAL WIP System.

#### **Subject**

The front suspension ball joints on about 375,000 of the above vehicles may allow dirt or water to enter the ball joint. This could result in premature ball joint wear and can cause the ball joint to separate. Ball joint separation can result in a loss of steering control and cause an accident without prior warning.

#### **Repair**

The left and right lower lateral arm ball joints must be inspected. If a ball joint boot is damaged or a ball joint is worn, the affected lower lateral arm assembly must be replaced. If a ball joint is within specifications, the bottom of the ball joint must be sealed.

**Parts Information**

<u>Part Number</u>	<u>Description</u>
05080664AA	Ball Joint Sealant
MR972465	Lower Lateral Arm Package - Left
MR972466	Lower Lateral Arm Package - Right

Each package contains one lower lateral arm assembly and one ball joint retaining nut.

**Each dealer** to whom vehicles in the recall were invoiced (or the current dealer at the same street address) will receive two right and two left Lower Lateral Arm Packages. Each dealer will also receive a one quart can of Ball Joint Sealant.

**NOTE:** There is enough ball joint sealant in each one quart can to seal approximately 50 ball joints.

**Special Tool Requirement**

Use of a special spring scale is required to perform the service procedure.

All Chrysler, Dodge and Jeep dealers received one (1) **Spring Gauge (Miller Special Tool #8828)** in May 2001 free of charge. Additional spring scales may be purchased from Miller Tool. Additional spring scales are not reimbursable by DaimlerChrysler.

<b>Service Procedure</b>
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### A. Inspect Lower Lateral Arm Ball Joints & Measure Ball Joint Play

1. Raise vehicle to a suitable level on an appropriate hoist.

**NOTE: The front tires must be allowed to hang from the suspension.**

2. Check the play of the left front ball joint by shaking the front tire by hand. If a large amount of play is detected, continue with Section “C” - Lower Lateral Arm Replacement. If no excessive play is found, continue with Step 3 of the inspection process.

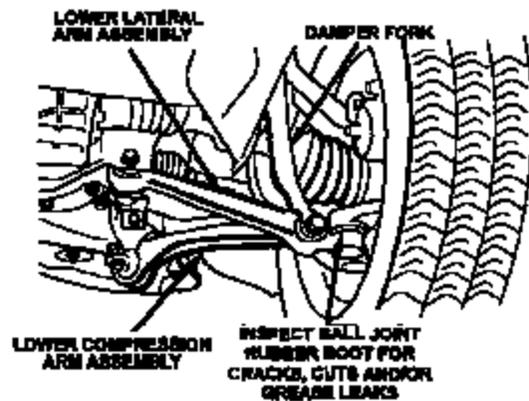


Figure 1 – Left Side Shown

3. Inspect the LEFT ball joint rubber boot on the lower lateral arm. Using a light, look for cracks, cuts and/or other damage by pushing the boot with your fingers (Figure 1). The boot is damaged if there is evidence of grease leakage. If necessary, use a clean cloth or cotton swab as an aid to determine if grease is present.
4. If the rubber boot is damaged or leaking grease, proceed to Section “C” – Lower Lateral Arm Replacement. If the rubber boot is not damaged, continue with Step 5 of this inspection procedure.

5. Remove the front wheel and tire assembly from the vehicle.
6. Measure the bottom of the lower lateral arm ball joint as shown in Figure 2. If the ball joint measurement is 1-1/8” to 1-5/32” (28mm to 30mm), the ball joint is considered a 1-1/8” (28mm) ball joint. If the ball joint measurement is 1-1/4” to 1-3/8” (32mm to 35mm), the ball joint is considered a 1-1/4” (32mm) ball joint.

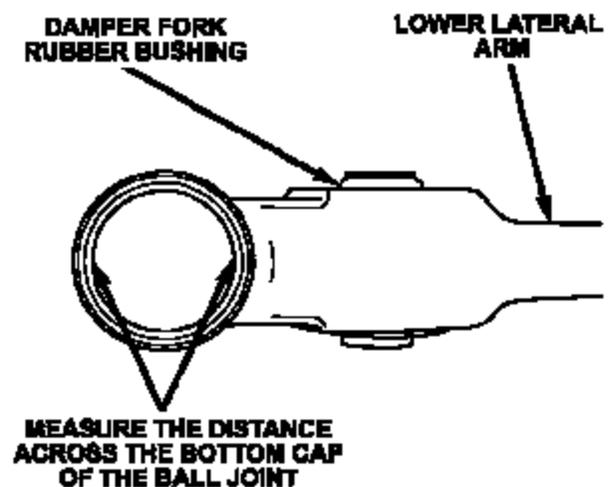


Figure 2 – Bottom View Shown

### Service Procedure (Continued)

7. Insert a brake pedal prop rod between the brake pedal and seat cushion to apply the brakes. This will prevent the brake disc from rotating during the inspection.
8. Place the steering wheel in the straight ahead position and remove the ignition key from the key cylinder.
9. Install lug nuts to secure the brake disc to the spindle hub (Figure 3). Tighten the lug nuts to 95 ft. lbs. (128 N·m).
10. To measure the vertical motion of the ball joint, set up a dial indicator with a magnetic base onto the left brake rotor and place the dial indicator measuring plunger on the center of the bottom cap of the lower lateral arm ball joint (Figure 3).
11. Place the hook of the spring gauge (Miller Tool #8828) on the drive shaft nut (Figure 4).
12. Pull down on the spring gauge until the needle on the spring gauge reads 33 lbs. (15 kg) and zero the dial indicator (Figure 4). Then slowly release the spring gauge.

**CAUTION:** Do not pull down on the spring gauge with more than 33 lbs. (15 kg) of force. Excessive force from pulling on the spring gauge will cause the suspension to flex slightly and the dial indicator will give an incorrect reading.

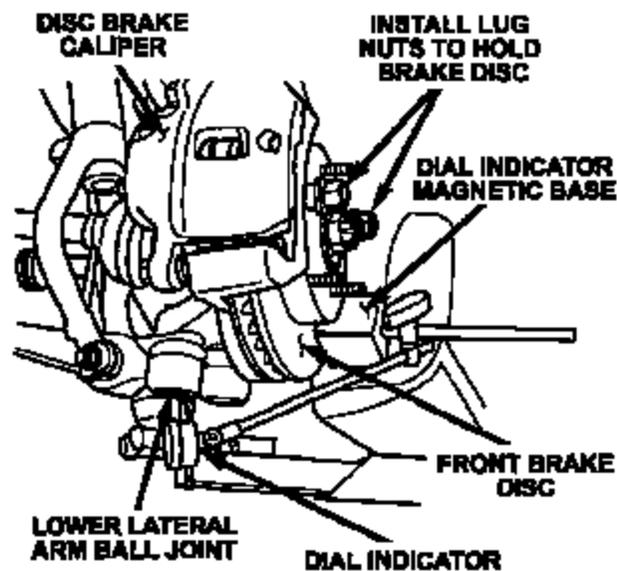


Figure 3 – Left Side Shown

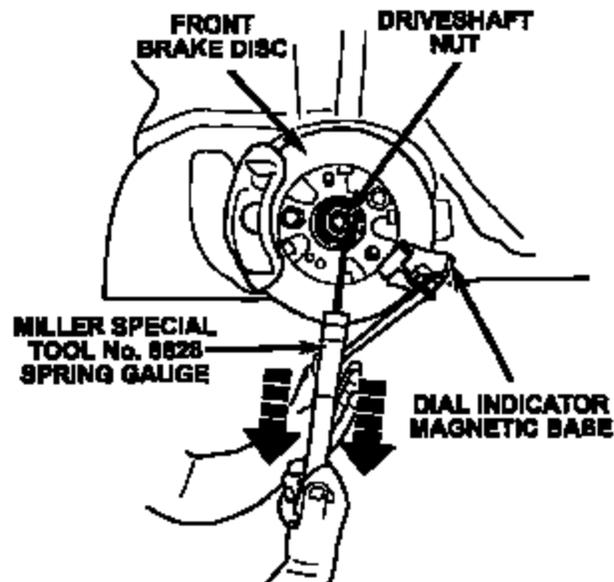


Figure 4

**Service Procedure (Continued)**

13. With the dial indicator still attached and set to zero, use the spring gauge to apply 33 lbs. (15 kg) of upward force to the driveshaft nut and read the dial indicator (Figure 5). Record the amount of total movement of the ball joint.

➤ For 1-1/8 inch (28mm) ball joints, if the total movement recorded is less than 0.020" (0.5mm), continue with Section "B" – Apply Sealant to the Ball Joint Cap. If the movement recorded is 0.020" (0.5mm) or more, the lower lateral arm must be replaced. Continue with Section "C" – Lower Lateral Arm Replacement.

➤ For 1-1/4 inch (32mm) ball joints, if the total movement recorded is less than 0.004" (0.1mm), continue with Section "B" – Apply Sealant to the Ball Joint Cap. If the movement recorded is 0.004" (0.1mm) or more, the lower lateral arm must be replaced. Continue with Section "C" – Lower Lateral Arm Replacement.

14. Repeat steps 2 through 13 to inspect the right side ball joint.

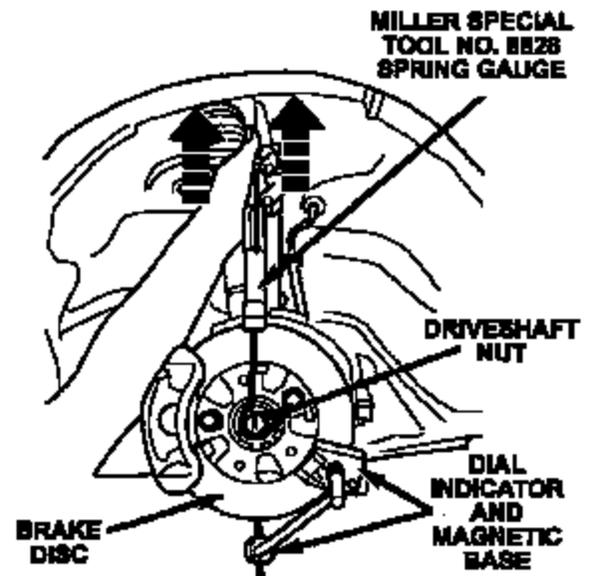


Figure 5

**Service Procedures (Continued)****B. Apply Sealant to the Ball Joint Cap**

1. Clean and dry the bottom of the ball joint cap and case with a clean shop towel.

**CAUTION:** Do not use solvents or detergent to clean the bottom of the ball joint.

2. Using a small brush, apply the sealant (P/N 05080664AA) to the bottom of the cap and case of the ball joint (Figure 6).
3. Do not touch the sealant once it is applied. The sealant will take approximately three hours to dry. However, the vehicle may be put back into service before the sealant is fully dried.

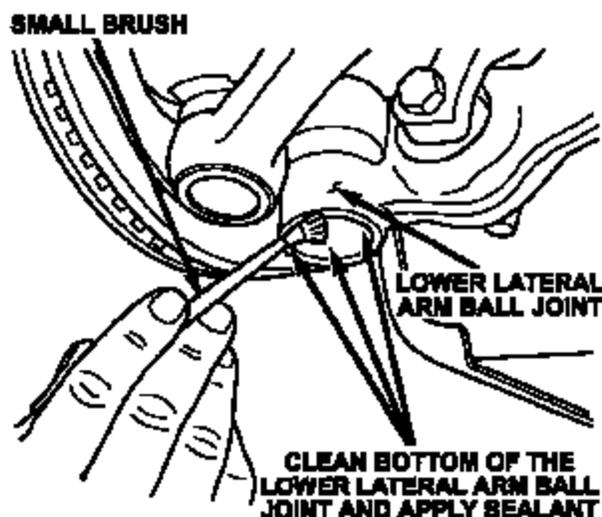


Figure 6

**C. Lower Lateral Arm Replacement:**

**NOTE:** Only lower lateral arms with damaged ball joint boots or excessive play, as determined by the inspection in Section "A," require replacement.

1. Loosen, but do not remove, the ball joint retaining nut.
2. Using special tool MB991113, separate the ball joint from steering knuckle (Figure 7).

**CAUTION:** Be sure to tie the cord of the special tool to the damper fork.

3. Remove and discard the ball joint retaining nut.

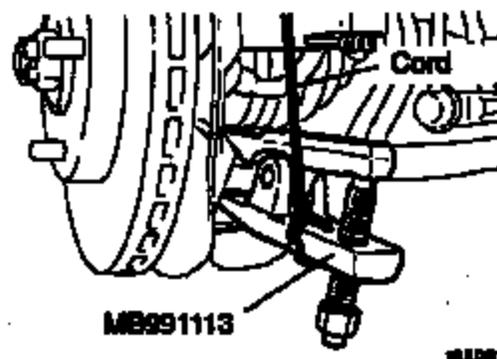
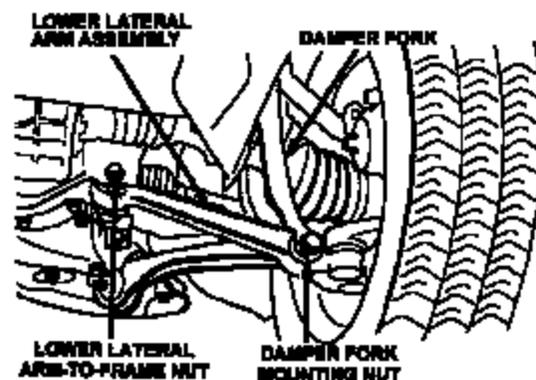


Figure 7

**Service Procedure (Continued)**

- Loosen, but do not remove, the lower lateral arm-to-frame mounting nut and bolt (Figure 8).
- Remove the damper fork mounting bolt and nut (Figure 8).
- Remove the lower lateral arm-to-frame mounting nut (Figure 8). Pull the bolt rearward far enough to clear the lateral arm bushing and remove the lower lateral arm from the vehicle.

**Figure 8**

**CAUTION:** It is possible to inadvertently install the lower lateral arms on the wrong side of the vehicle. Verify that the correct arm is being installed on the correct side of the vehicle by comparing the new arm to the old arm.

- Apply a light coat of Mopar wheel bearing grease (P/N 04318064) or equivalent to the top of the ball joint boot lip, around the ball joint stud on the new lower lateral arm. This helps to prevent ball joint boot wear after installation.

**CAUTION:** Do NOT apply grease to the ball joint stud or threads. If any grease is inadvertently applied to the ball joint threads it must be wiped clean.

- Place the new lower lateral arm into position and loosely install the lower lateral arm-to-frame mounting nut and bolt, **but do not tighten** (Figure 8).
- Loosely install the damper fork mounting nut and bolt, **but do not tighten** (Figure 8).
- Start the new ball joint retaining nut onto the ball joint stud by hand.

**Service Procedure (Continued)**

11. Place a jack stand under the damper fork bushing and apply sufficient pressure to the bottom of the lower lateral arm to prevent the ball joint stud from spinning (Figure 9). Tighten the ball joint retaining nut to 47 ft. lbs. (64 N·m).

**CAUTION:** Do not place the jack stand directly under the lower ball joint. Damage to the ball joint sealant may occur.

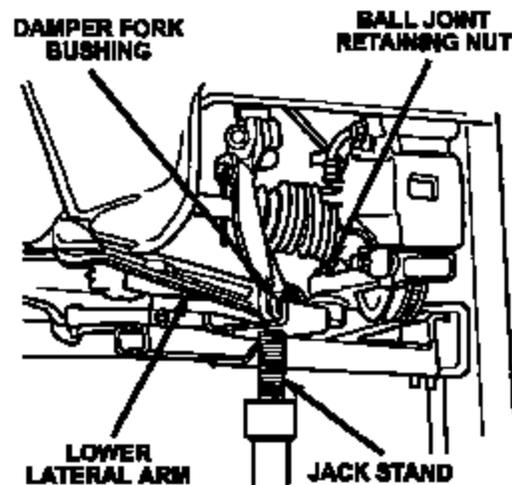


Figure 9

12. Install tire and wheel assembly. Tighten the lug nuts to 95 ft. lbs. (128 N·m).

**NOTE:** If both lower lateral arms require replacement, repeat steps 1 through 12 to replace the other arm before continuing with step 13 of this procedure.

13. Lower the vehicle.
14. With full vehicle weight on the suspension, tighten the left and/or right lateral arm-to-frame mounting nut and bolt to 78 ft. lbs. (106 N·m) (Figure 8).
15. Tighten the left and/or right damper fork mounting nut and bolt to 64 ft. lbs. (88 N·m) (Figure 8).

**CAUTION:** Failure to have full vehicle weight on the suspension before tightening lower lateral arm and damper fork mounting fasteners may cause lower lateral arm rubber bushing failure.

16. Place the vehicle on a front-end alignment rack. Install the wheel alignment equipment onto the vehicle per alignment equipment manufacturer's instructions. Adjust the vehicle's front wheel total toe-in settings to 0.0 in.  $\pm$  0.12 in. (0.0 mm  $\pm$  3mm) on all models.

<b>Completion Reporting and Reimbursement</b>
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Claims for vehicles that have been serviced must be submitted on the DIAL System. Claims submitted will be used by DaimlerChrysler to record recall service completions and provide dealer payments.

Use one of the following labor operation numbers and time allowances:

	<b><u>Labor Operation Number</u></b>	<b><u>Time Allowance</u></b>
Inspect boots, measure both lower lateral arm ball joints for play and reseal both lower lateral arm ball joints	02-96-71-82	0.5 hours
Inspect boots and measure both lower lateral arm ball joints for play. Reseal one lower lateral arm ball joint and replace one lower lateral arm	02-96-71-83	1.3 hours
Inspect boots, measure both lower lateral arm ball joints for play and replace both lower lateral arms	02-96-71-84	1.6 hours
Inspect boots and measure one lower lateral arm ball joint for play. Reseal one lower lateral ball joint and replace one lower lateral arm	02-96-71-85	1.2 hours
Inspect boots, measure one lower lateral arm ball joint for play and replace both lower lateral arms	02-96-71-86	1.5 hours
Inspect boots and replace both lower lateral arms	02-96-71-87	1.3 hours

Add the cost of the lower lateral arm package(s) plus applicable dealer allowance to your claim, if necessary.

**NOTE:** See the Warranty Administration Manual, Recall Claim Processing Section, for complete recall claim processing instructions.

**Parts Return**

Not required.

**Dealer Notification and Vehicle List**

All dealers will receive a copy of this dealer recall notification letter by first class mail. Two additional copies will be sent through the DCMMS, and the MDS2 will be updated to include this recall in the near future. **Each dealer to whom involved vehicles were invoiced (or the current dealer at the same street address) will receive a list of their involved vehicles.** The vehicle list is arranged in Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) sequence. Owners known to DaimlerChrysler are also listed. The lists are for dealer reference in arranging for service of involved vehicles.

**DIAL System Functions 53 and VIP**

All involved vehicles have been entered to DIAL System Functions 53 and VIP for dealer inquiry as needed.

Function 53 provides involved dealers with an updated VIN list of their incomplete vehicles. The customer name, address and phone number are listed if known. Completed vehicles are removed from Function 53 within several days of repair claim submission. To use this system, type "53" at the "ENTER FUNCTION" prompt, then type "ORD967".

**Owner Notification and Service Scheduling**

All involved vehicle owners known to DaimlerChrysler are being notified of the service requirement by first class mail. They are requested to schedule appointments for this service with their dealers. A copy of the owner letter is attached.

Enclosed with each owner letter is an Owner Notification Form. The involved vehicle and recall are identified on the form for owner or dealer reference as needed.

**Vehicle Not Available**

If a vehicle is not available for service, let us know by filling out the pre-addressed Owner Notification Form or describe the reason on a postcard and mail to:

DaimlerChrysler Corporation  
CIMS 482-00-85  
800 Chrysler Drive East  
Auburn Hills, Michigan 48326-2757

**Additional Information**

If you have any questions or need assistance in completing this action, please contact your Zone Service Office.

Customer Services Field Operations  
DaimlerChrysler Corporation

# DAIMLERCHRYSLER

## **SAFETY RECALL TO INSPECT YOUR VEHICLE'S LOWER LATERAL ARM BALL JOINTS AND REPLACE THEM IF NECESSARY**

Dear DaimlerChrysler Vehicle Owner:

This notice is sent to you in accordance with the requirements of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act.

DaimlerChrysler Corporation has determined that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety, exists in some 1995 through 2000 model year Dodge Avenger and Chrysler Sebring Coupe and 1995 through 1998 model year Eagle Talon vehicles.

**NOTE: The 1995 and 1996 model year vehicles listed above were involved in a previous recall for the same issue. To properly correct the condition, these vehicles must also have this recall performed.**

***The problem is...***

The front suspension ball joints on your vehicle (identified on the enclosed form) may allow dirt and/or water to enter the ball joint. This can result in premature ball joint wear and cause the ball joint to separate. Ball joint separation could result in a loss of steering control and cause an accident without warning.

***What DaimlerChrysler and your dealer will do...***

DaimlerChrysler will repair your vehicle free of charge (parts and labor). To do this, your dealer will inspect both lower lateral arm ball joints. If the ball joints are not damaged or worn, the ball joints will be sealed. The inspection and sealant application will take less than an hour to complete. If lower lateral arm replacement is necessary, another hour will be required. However, additional time may be necessary depending on how dealer appointments are scheduled and processed.

***What you must do to ensure your safety...***

- Simply contact your dealer right away to schedule a service appointment. Ask the dealer to hold the parts for your vehicle or to order them before your appointment.
- Bring the enclosed form with you to your dealer. It identifies the required service to the dealer.

***If you need help...***

If you have questions or concerns which the dealer is unable to resolve, please contact the DaimlerChrysler Customer Assistance Center at 1-800-853-1403. A representative will assist you.

If you have already experienced the problem described above and have paid to have it repaired, you may send your original receipts and/or other adequate proof of payment to the following address for reimbursement: DaimlerChrysler Customer Assistance Center, P.O. Box 1040, St. Charles, MO 63302-1040, Attention: Recall Center.

If your dealer fails or is unable to remedy this defect without charge and within a reasonable time, you may submit a written complaint to the Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590, or call the toll-free Auto Safety Hotline at 1-888-327-4236.

We're sorry for any inconvenience, but we are sincerely concerned about your safety. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

***Buckle up  
for Safety***

Customer Services Field Operations  
DaimlerChrysler Corporation

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