

DAIMLERCHRYSLER

DaimlerChrysler Corporation

Stephan J. Speth

Director
Vehicle Compliance & Safety Affairs

November 1, 2004

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:

04V-531
(3 pages)

Attached is DaimlerChrysler Corporation's Defect Information Report, complying with the requirements of 49 CFR Part 573, Defect and Noncompliance Reports, which contains details of a potential safety related defect in 2001-2002 model year Dodge Caravan, Grand Caravan, Chrysler Voyager, and Town & Country vehicles. In certain conditions involving extreme heat and humidity, condensation from the instrument panel air conditioning ducts may drip through vent holes in the top of the radio and result in a short circuit that subsequently sends direct current to the rear speakers. This may result in a speaker fire. DaimlerChrysler Corporation will conduct a voluntary safety recall to install protective tape to the top of the radio assembly.

Sincerely,



Stephan J. Speth

Enclosures: Defect Information Report for DaimlerChrysler Corporation Recall D48

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

DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT FOR DAIMLERCHRYSLER RECALL D48

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Submission date: November 1, 2004**Identifying classification of vehicles potentially affected:**

Make	Model	Model Year	Inclusive Dates of Manufacture	Vehicle Volume
Dodge	Caravan, Grand Caravan	2001 - 2002	4/27/2001-7/31/2002	238,000 (est. with base radio only)
Chrysler	Town & Country Voyager			

Estimated percentage containing defect: Unknown**Description of defect:**

Condensation from the instrument panel air conditioning ducts may drip through vent holes in the top of the radio and result in a short circuit that subsequently sends direct current to the rear speakers. This may result in a speaker fire.

The following chronology of principal events occurred between July 2004 and October 2004 and led to the determination of a defect:

- On July 7, 2004, NHTSA opened PE04-049 based on three allegations that the driver side rear speaker caught fire while the vehicle was being operated in a hot, humid environment.
- As part of the investigation, DaimlerChrysler Corporation repurchased two vehicles reported to have experienced the alleged condition for further analysis. One vehicle was received in early September and a second in late October.
- Inspection of the vehicles in September and October did not reveal any abnormalities or damage related to the vehicle wiring. Inspection revealed the presence of water witness marks on the top surface of the radio. Both repurchased vehicles were equipped with the base audio system.
- Analysis of the radio from the first vehicle was completed in mid-October and confirmed that there was liquid intrusion onto the radio circuit board. It was determined that the liquid intrusion resulted in a short circuit that subsequently sent direct current to the rear speaker.
- Further inspection revealed that heating and air conditioning ducts are routed in the area above the radio. Review of the duct change history revealed that foam covering had been removed from the ducts late in the 2001 model year.
- When the foam was eliminated, a waffle pattern was added to the ducts to prevent the accumulation of condensation formed during air conditioning system operation. The

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effectiveness of the waffle pattern was validated through lab testing prior to implementation.

- The base radio circuitry design is not equipped with offset protection that would prevent direct current from being provided to the speakers during a short circuit.
- DaimlerChrysler Corporation is aware of nine complaints related to this condition. All nine involve vehicles equipped with the base radio system, built after the foam was removed from the duct, and the waffle pattern was implemented. None of the complaints allege injury.
- The investigation revealed that a new base radio was released for the 2003 MY. The new radio was implemented because it offered enhanced features and capabilities not available with the old design, such as compatibility with CD changers and digital signal processing. Review of the new radio revealed that the circuitry is equipped with direct current offset protection.
- The premium audio system has amplified speakers not sensitive to this direct current condition.
- This data was presented to the Vehicle Regulations Committee on October 26, 2004 who decided to conduct a safety recall to repair the affected vehicles.

Statement of measures to be taken to correct defect:

DaimlerChrysler Corporation will add a special tape to the top of the radio to prevent the potential of water intrusion. DaimlerChrysler expects to initiate national notification to both dealers and owners when a sufficient quantity of parts becomes available, which is currently estimated to be in the first quarter of 2005.

DaimlerChrysler Corporation has a longstanding policy and practice of reimbursing owners who have incurred the cost of repairing a problem that subsequently becomes the subject of a field action. To ensure consistency, DaimlerChrysler Corporation, as part of the owner letter, will request that customers send original receipt and/or other adequate proof of payment to the company for confirmation of the expense.