

## ODI RESUME

INVESTIGATION: EA94-005                      DATE CLOSED: October 25, 1995  
 SUBJECT : Liftgate Latches                      DATE OPENED: January 31, 1994  
 PROMPTED BY : Police Report

PRINCIPAL ENGINEER: Julie Abraham

MANUFACTURER: Chrysler Corporation  
 MODEL(S): Dodge Caravan, Plymouth Voyager, and Chrysler Town  
 and Country

MODEL YR: 1984-1995  
 VEH POP: 4,372,000

SYNOPSIS: Inability of liftgate latch to remain closed during motor  
 vehicle crashes

### FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	TOTAL
# COMPLAINTS:	207
# EJECTIONS	134
# INJURIES:	98
# FATALS:	37

ACTION: This investigation is closed.

BRCH CHF

*Thomas Lopez*  
10-25-95  
 DATE

OFC DIR

*[Signature]*  
10-25-95  
 DATE

SUMMARY: See page attached.

**SUMMARY:** Liftgate latches in the subject vehicles have failed in low and moderate speed impacts resulting in occupant ejections, injuries, and fatalities. There are two failure modes associated with latch failure: fork bolt-detent lever bypass, and inertial unlatching. NHTSA analyses of Chrysler and peer minivans took the form of static and dynamic crash testing, engineering evaluations, complaint and field analyses, and real world data analyses. A technical report discussing these analyses can be found in the Engineering Analysis Technical Report in the public viewing file.

Chrysler has advised NHTSA that it will conduct a campaign to replace the latches on all the subject vehicles. The Chrysler campaign will consist of notification letters to all owners; free replacement of all latches with stronger, safer latches regardless of the age of the minivans; national advertising to promote customer awareness of the campaign; quarterly reports regarding campaign completion rates; as well as additional measures to ensure a high completion rate, above and beyond the actions that normally would be taken in a formal safety recall. These include follow up written and telephonic notifications to owners who do not bring their vehicles in for corrective action.

NHTSA firmly believes that the crash performance of the latches on these minivans raises serious safety concerns, and that the campaign addresses these concerns. The Chrysler corrective action will increase the strength of the liftgate latches and decrease the potential for inertial unlatching, thereby reducing the risk of crash-related openings of the liftgate and possible occupant ejection through the liftgate opening. Owners of Chrysler minivans will get a stronger, safer latch free of charge at the earliest possible time, without the need for further technical investigation and complex and time-consuming litigation with an uncertain outcome.

Based on the above, ODI is closing this investigation.