



ODI RESUME

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

Investigation: EA 07-002
Prompted By:
Date Opened: 01/30/2007 Date Closed: 07/12/2007
Principal Investigator: Bruce York-B
Subject: Steering Column Weld Cracks

Manufacturer: Thomas Built Buses, Inc., Freightliner LLC
Products: 2004-2006 Freightliner Century, Columbia, & Coronado Vehicle
Population: 26006 (Estimated)

Problem Description: Weak or incomplete welds may result in steering column failures. These steering column failures may result in difficulty controlling the vehicle.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	0	0	0
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	CONFIDENTIAL	CONFIDENTIAL

*Description of Other: Field reports submitted as early warning data to ODI from the manufacturer.

Action: This engineering analysis is closed. Freightliner Corporation has filed a safety recall (07V-289).

Engineer: <u>Bruce York</u>	Date: <u>07/12/2007</u>
Div. Chief: <u>Richard Boyd</u>	Date: <u>07/12/2007</u>
Office Dir.: <u>Kathleen C. DeMeter</u>	Date: <u>07/12/2007</u>

Summary: As a result of the ODI investigation, Freightliner has agreed to recall (number 07V-289) all of the vehicles manufactured with steering columns potentially missing welds. The recall remedy will involve inspecting the recalled vehicles for missing welds and if found replace the steering column.

Early warning aggregate data submitted to NHTSA by Freightliner suggested that a steering problem (EWR code 01) existed for the 2004 and 2005 Century and Columbia class vehicles. The count of field reports submitted for the first quarter of 2006 was higher than the average of the previous 6 quarters for the aggregate steering data.

ODI's further review of the EWR data found field reports that described steering column failures as a result of steering column welds cracking or breaking.

Information received from Freightliner detailed failures of the steering columns on the subject vehicles. These failures were the result of missing and cracked welds on the steering column assembly.

During testing of vehicles containing defective steering columns, ODI determined that weld failures in the steering column create a situation where the vehicle becomes difficult to steer or may startle the driver upon failing, thus presenting a safety risk.

A copy of the recall is attached. Freightliner's action resolves the issues raised by this investigation and, therefore, this investigation is closed.