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DEFECTS INVESTIGATION
RECALL MGMT DIV.

Nasser Zamani
Manager
Compliance and Regulatory Affairs

**07V-306
(3 pages)**

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July 3, 2007

Dan Smith
Associate Administrator for Vehicle Safety
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Defect Information Report FL-501, AAC axle Steering Arm Bolts

Mr. Smith:

In accordance with Part 573 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Freightliner LLC herewith reports a safety campaign to recall approximately 18,000 Freightliner, Sterling, Western Star, Freightliner Custom Chassis, and Thomas Built Buses vehicles manufactured January 5, 2007 to May 17, 2007 with a defect in the front axle assembly.

Attached is Freightliner's Defect Information Report.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

Nasser Zamani

Cc: Michael Mason, CAL-OSHA

Enclosure

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Defect Information Report

(Section 573.6)

July 3, 2007

(c)(1) Manufacturer: Freightliner LLC
P.O. BOX 3849
Portland, Oregon 97208
(503) 745-5219

Brands: Freightliner, Sterling, Western Star, Freightliner Custom Chassis, Thomas Built Buses

(c)(2) Vehicles identification:

Model(s) affected:

Freightliner: Columbia, Century ST, Coronado, FLD120SD, Classic, Classic XL, Business Class M2

Sterling: Acterra, A-Line, L-Line

Western Star: 4900

FCCC: B2 School Bus Chassis, van chassis, RV motorhome chassis

Thomas Built Buses: C2 Saf-T-Liner School Bus, HDX bus models

Model Years affected: 2007 to 2008

Manufacture Dates: January 5, 2007 to May 17, 2007

Basis for determining population: All models with 8,000 pound to 14,700 pound capacity AAC front axles. Axle serial numbers provided by AAC were matched to VINs using Freightliner production records.

Component manufacturer if other than the vehicle manufacturer:

Axle Alliance Company (AAC)

Detroit Diesel (part of the Freightliner group of companies)

13400 Outer Drive West

Detroit, Michigan 48239

(c)(3) Total number of vehicles potentially affected: Approximately 18,000

(c)(4) Percentage of vehicles estimated to contain the defect: less than 1%

(c)(5) Description of the defect: During front axle assembly, the fasteners that attach the steering arm or tie rod arms to the spindle may be over or under tightened.

49CFR Section 577.5(f) Evaluation of the risk to motor vehicle safety: Incorrectly torqued steering arm fasteners may fatigue and fracture and cause a crash without warning.

(c)(6) Chronology of principal events:

In April 2007, a customer fleet driver reported an increased vibration in the steering and pulled to the side of the road. The following inspection found that the rear most attaching bolt that retains the LH tie rod end bracket was missing, and the front position bolt was cracked and ready to fall out. The same fleet had reported a similar failure earlier. The axle assembly was returned to AAC for evaluation.

AAC investigated and found the steering arm and tie rod arms may not have been tightened correctly on some axle assemblies following a production process change at the beginning of the year. AAC implemented corrective action in production at the end of April.

(c)(7) Noncompliance-test or other data: not applicable

(c)(8) Remedial program: Repairs will be performed by Freightliner dealerships and Direct Warranty customers, i.e., customers approved by Freightliner to do their own warranty repairs. The suspect fasteners will be inspected. Dealer notifications will be posted August 24, 2007.

Estimated Owner Notification Date: Customer notification will be by first class mail using Freightliner records to determine the customers affected. This will be completed approximately August 24, 2007.

Reimbursement Plan: All prior repairs, if any, would have been completed under warranty.

(c) (9) Communications sent to dealers and owners: Copies will be submitted as a supplemental report when available.

(c) (10) Copy of proposed owner notification letter: A draft will be sent for ODI review when available.

(c) (11) Manufacturer's campaign number: FL-501