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DEFECTS INVESTIGATION
RECALL MGMT DIV.



Nasser Zamani
Manager
Compliance and Regulatory Affairs

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August 28, 2007

07V-403
(3 Pages)

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-513, Front Axle Steering Stops

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 450 Freightliner Columbia, Century ST, Coronado, and Classic XL manufactured November 2004 through August 2007 with a defect in the front axle stops. The driver side tie rod ball socket assembly may be damaged in a severe turn.

Attached is Freightliner's Defect Information Report.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nasser Zamani". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nasser Zamani

Cc: Michael Mason, CAL-OSHA

Enclosure

Certified Mail# 7004 2890000412021017

Defect Information Report

(Section 573.6)

August 28, 2007

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

Brands: Freightliner

(c)(2) Vehicles identification:

Model(s) affected: Columbia, Century ST, Coronado, Classic XL,

Model Years affected: 2005 thru 2008

Manufacture Dates: November 2004 thru August 2007

Basis for determining population: Customer field test trucks and certain production vehicles equipped with rack and pinion steering.

Component manufacturer if other than the vehicle manufacturer: not applicable

(c)(3) Total number of vehicles potentially affected: Approximately 450

(c)(4) Percentage of vehicles estimated to contain the defect: less than 10%

(c)(5) Description of the defect: The ball socket assembly at the inner end of the driver side tie rod may be damaged in a sharp turn. Excessive tie rod angles may loosen the tie rod in the ball socket or damage the threaded tie rod socket attachment to the steering rack on the driver side. The threaded end of the ball socket assembly may fracture and separate.

49CFR Section 577.5(f) Evaluation of the risk to motor vehicle safety:

A fractured tie rod assembly will make the vehicle more difficult to control at higher speeds and a crash may occur.

(c)(6) Chronology of principal events:

Freightliner received four reports of loose tie rod ends on customer field test trucks. The inner ball socket assembly on the driver side was loose on the threads of the steering rack. Returned parts showed signs of contact between the tie rod and the edge of the shell in the ball socket assembly. Engineering layouts with the nominal axle stop adjustment were reviewed and showed interference would be possible in the ball socket on some vehicles. Steering loads at low speeds and contact in sharp turns with braking may loosen the ball socket attachment at the threads. With movement in the threaded attachment, the threads on the ball socket assembly may fatigue and crack. The tie rod ball socket may eventually separate from the steering rack.

Engineering and Product Validation tested a truck with the driver side tie rod disconnected. At slow speeds, the non-steered front wheel castered and followed the steered wheel. At higher speeds, the non-steered wheel began to oscillate and the truck became more difficult to control

(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. Owners will be notified approximately October 26, 2007. The front axle steering stops will be changed to prevent interference in the tie rod ball socket assembly and steering components will be replaced.

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 October 26, 2007

Reimbursement Plan: All prior repairs have been complete 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-513