



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 06-033

Date Opened: 08/30/2006

Date Closed: 01/30/2007

Principal Investigator: Bruce York

Subject: Steering Column Weld Cracks

Manufacturer: Freightliner LLC

Products: 2004 - 2005 Freightliner Century & Columbia Class Vehicles

Population: 98178

Problem Description: Weak or incomplete Welds may result in Steering Column failures. These Steering Column failures can 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	8	8

*Description of Other: Warranty claims describing Weld Failures on the Steering Column Assembly.

Action: The preliminary evaluation has been upgraded to an engineering analysis (EA07-002).

Engineer: Bruce York *BY*

Date: 01/30/2007

Div. Chief: Richard Boyd

Date: 01/30/2007

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 01/30/2007

Summary: Early warning aggregate data submitted to NHTSA by Freightliner suggests that a steering (EWR CODE 01) problem exists for the 2004 AND 2005 Century and Columbia Class Vehicles. The count of field reports submitted for the first quarter of 2006 was significantly higher than the average of the previous 6 quarters for the aggregate steering data.

Further review of the EWR data found field reports that described Steering Column failures as a result of welds cracking or breaking.

Information received from Freightliner details a number of steering column failures on the subject vehicles. These failures were the result of missing and cracked welds on the Steering Column Assembly.

An engineering analysis (EA) is warranted to determine if the weld failures in the Steering Column create a situation where the vehicle becomes difficult to steer or startles the driver presenting a safety risk.