



U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration

ODI Resume

INVESTIGATION: PE02- 013
SUBJECT: Transfer Case Lockup
PROMPTED BY: IE01-056
PRINCIPAL ENGINEER: Jennifer Russert

DATE OPENED: 31-JAN-02

MANUFACTURER: Mitsubishi Motors and DaimlerChrysler
MODEL (S): Mitsubishi 3000GT VR4 (AWD) and Dodge Stealth RT TT (AWD)
MODEL YEAR (S): 1992-1999 model year (MY) Mitsubishi 3000GT VR4
1992-1996 MY Dodge Stealth RT TT.
VEHICLE POPULATION: Unknown

PROBLEM DESCRIPTION: Complaints alleged that the transfer case assembly locked up and/or was leaking lubricant. Low lubricant levels in a transfer case can damage the bearings and cause them to seize, locking up the vehicle power train without prior warning. A transfer case lockup may immobilize all wheels and cause a loss of vehicle control, potentially resulting in a crash.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Mitsubishi	DaimlerChrysler	TOTAL
COMPLAINTS:	20	TBD	TBD	TBD
CRASHES:	0	TBD	TBD	TBD
INJURIES:	0	TBD	TBD	TBD
FATALS:	0	TBD	TBD	TBD

ACTION: A Preliminary Evaluation (PE) has been opened.

ENGINEER: Jennifer Russert DIV CHIEF [Signature] OFC DIR: [Signature]

DATE: 1-23-02 DATE: 1/29/02 DATE: 1-31-02

SUMMARY: ODI has received 20 complaints of transfer case failure in the subject vehicles. Thirteen of these have alleged wheel/transfer case lockup, twelve of the complaints have stated the lubricant was found to be leaking out of the transfer case, and three complainants have experienced transfer case lockups that resulted in a loss of vehicle control. One complainant reported that while driving his vehicle at 85 mph, the wheels locked up without warning, causing the vehicle to spin out of control and off the highway. He alleged that his mechanic informed him there was no lubricant in the transfer case.

Recall 93V-033 was issued March 3, 1993 recalling approximately 5,854 1991 MY Mitsubishi 3000GT VR4 and Dodge Stealth RT TT vehicles equipped with all wheel drive (AWD) transfer cases for a condition that could allow oil to leak from the transfer case. This recall was influenced by ODI investigation EA92-004.

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The 1999 MY was the last year of production for the 3000GT VR4 vehicle and the 1996 MY was the last year of production for the Stealth RT TT vehicle. There are no complaints on the 1994 or 1998-1999 MY Mitsubishi 3000GT VR4 or the 1995-1996 MY Dodge Stealth RT TT, these MYs have been included in the scope of this issue as it is believed that these vehicles have the same transfer case as the other models.

ODI has received an increased number of complaints in 2001 as compared to previous years. See the bar chart of complaints received by ODI below.

