

# DAIMLER

## Defect Information Report

(Section 573.6)

**FL-692**

Date of Submission: **September 29, 2015**

Manufacturer: Daimler Trucks North America LLC  
P.O. BOX 3849  
Portland, Oregon 97208

Type of Report:  Safety Defect  Non-Compliance

### Vehicle Information

Model Yr. Start: 2011 Model Yr. End: 2014

Make: *Freightliner*

Model: *Cascadia, Business Class M2, Coronado, Columbia Glider*

Production Dates: Begin: 04/05/2010  
End: 06/15/2013

### Descriptive Information:

*Vehicles manufactured with suspect Fontaine Ultra LT Fifth Wheels*

Number potentially involved: 5801 Estimated percentage of involve with defect: 100%

### Defect / Noncompliance Description

#### For this Defect/Noncompliance:

#### Describe the defect or noncompliance:

*Fontaine has reported "The subject fifth wheels and their locking mechanisms are susceptible to cumulative damage that may cause the fifth wheel lock to function improperly or a failure of the locking mechanism to properly engage. This cumulative damage is the result of the failure of operators to use proper coupling and maintenance procedures over a period of time. These practices include, but are not limited to, high coupling, a failure to conduct a proper visual inspection, a failure to ensure that the fifth wheel is in the fully open and ready to couple position prior to coupling, and failure to follow recommended maintenance practices. See attached Fontaine recall 15E-066*

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**If a noncompliance, provide the applicable FMVSS:**

**Check if this recall only affects products in certain geographic regions.**

**Describe the safety risk:**

*Fontaine reports that "Where cumulative damage has occurred and goes unnoticed during visual inspections and maintenance of the fifth wheel, the fifth wheel lock may fail to function properly and the locking mechanism of a damaged fifth wheel may fail to properly engage."*

**If applicable, identify the manufacture of the defective or noncompliant component.**

*Fontaine Fifth Wheel Company  
7574 Commerce Circle  
Trussville, AL 35173*

## **Chronology of Defect / Noncompliance Determination**

**Provide the chronology of events leading up to the defect decision or test data for the noncompliance decision.:**

*In September 2015, Fontaine Notified DTNA that it had determined a defect existed in Ultra LT Fifth Wheels. DTNA decided to conduct a voluntary safety recall on vehicles equipped with suspect Ultra LT Fifth Wheels*

## **Identify the Remedy**

**Describe the defect/noncompliance remedy program, including the manufacture's plan for reimbursement.**

*Suspect Fifth Wheels will be replaced . Repairs will be performed by Daimler Trucks North America authorized service facilities. Copies of the reimbursement plan will be submitted as a supplemental report when available.*

## **Identify the Recall Schedule**

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**Describe the recall schedule for notifications.:**

*Customer notification will be by first class mail using Daimler Trucks North America records to determine the customers affected*

**Planned Dealer Notification Begin Date:** 11/28/2015  
**Planned Dealer Notification End Date:** 11/28/2015  
**Planned Owner Notification Begin Date:** 11/28/2015  
**Planned Owner Notification End Date:** 11/28/2015

**Manufacture's identification code for this recall (if applicable):** FL-692

**Manufactures Comments to NHTSA Staff**

*Use this field only as needed*

**DTNA Representative;**



Andy Jones  
Senior Manager  
Compliance and Regulatory Affairs

**Part 573 Safety Recall Report****15E-066****Manufacturer Name :** Fontaine Fifth Wheel Company**Submission Date :** AUG 12,2015**NHTSA Recall No. :** 15E-066**Manufacturer Recall No. :** NR**Manufacturer Information :**

Manufacturer Name : Fontaine Fifth Wheel Company

Address : 7574 Commerce Circle

Trussville AL 35173

Company phone : 2056614959

**Population :**

Number of potentially involved : 6,800

Estimated percentage with defect : 100

**Equipment Information :**

Brand / Trade : Fontaine Fifth Wheel

Model : Ultra LT

Part No. : SLTPL4000

Size : 36" x 36"

Function : Connector

Descriptive Information : Connects the trailer to a tractor in a tractor trailer combination.

Production Dates : JUL 29, 2009 - MAY 27, 2013

**Description of Defect :**

**Description of the Defect :** The subject fifth wheels and their locking mechanisms are susceptible to cumulative damage that may cause the fifth wheel lock to function improperly or a failure of the locking mechanism to properly engage. This cumulative damage is the result of the failure of operators to use proper coupling and maintenance procedures over a period of time. These practices include, but are not limited to, high coupling, a failure to conduct a proper visual inspection, a failure to ensure that the fifth wheel is in the fully open and ready to couple position prior to coupling, and failure to follow recommended maintenance practices.

FMVSS 1 : NR

FMVSS 2 : NR

**Description of the Safety Risk :** Where cumulative damage has occurred and goes unnoticed during visual inspections and maintenance of the fifth wheel, the fifth wheel lock may fail to function properly and the locking mechanism of a damaged fifth wheel may fail to properly engage.

**Description of the Cause :** The subject fifth wheels and their locking mechanisms are susceptible to cumulative damage that may cause the fifth wheel lock to function improperly or a failure of the locking mechanism to properly engage. This cumulative damage is the result of the failure of operators to use proper coupling and maintenance procedures over a period of time. These practices include, but are not limited to, high coupling, a

failure to conduct a proper visual inspection, a failure to ensure that the fifth wheel is in the fully open and ready to couple position prior to coupling, and failure to follow recommended maintenance practices.

Identification of Any Warning that can Occur : Owner/Operators should inspect each of the Ultra LT fifth wheels in their fleets to look for signs of any damage, including bent operating handles, wedge guides, locking wedges and locking jaws. Special care should be taken to inspect fifth wheels after known or suspected improper coupling attempts and instances in which preventative maintenance has not been performed per Fontaine Fifth Wheel's instructions. Where the damage to the fifth wheel caused by improper coupling procedures is severe, drivers may notice during their required visual inspection of the fifth wheel that the locking mechanism of the fifth wheel does not extend across the entire throat of the fifth wheel. In some instances where the fifth wheel locking mechanism has been damaged, the driver may notice excessive slack in the fifth wheel connection as he operates the vehicle.

**Supplier Identification :****Component Manufacturer**

Name : Fontaine Fifth Wheel

Address : 7574 Commerce Circle

Trussville ALABAMA 35173

Country : United States

**Chronology :**

Fontaine manufactured the Ultra LT fifth wheel between 2009 and 2013. In February 2011, Fontaine engaged in a Product Enhancement Campaign to modify the locking wedge on first generation Ultra LT fifth wheels to make it more likely that the fifth wheels would fail a tug test if operators had not achieved a proper lock and had failed to conduct the required visual inspection.

In the spring of 2012, Fontaine issued a Technical Service Bulletin to its Ultra LT customers to address cumulative damage to the fifth wheel and its locking mechanism Fontaine was observing in the field caused by repeated improper coupling attempts and maintenance procedures.

Fontaine Fifth Wheel discontinued the Ultra LT in 2013 as part of a broader product rationalization effort.

In January 2014 an Ultra LT fifth wheel was involved in a fatal accident in Ohio. That fifth wheel was manufactured with the product enhancement of February 2011 already incorporated into its design and was found to be undamaged. The Ohio State Highway Patrol's investigation into the accident found the fifth wheel and its locking mechanism to be fully functional. Later tests to the fifth wheel confirmed its functionality.

Fontaine reported this accident to NHTSA pursuant to the agency's Tread Act reporting requirements.

Fontaine Fifth Wheel proactively reached out to NHTSA in May 2015 to discuss conducting a field campaign to replace the remainder of the subject population of 2009-2013 Fontaine Ultra LT fifth wheels sold in the United States in response to continued field observations of damaged fifth wheels. Fontaine did not consider there to be a safety related defect in the units, but had decided to replace the units to provide more robust feedback to operators, to reduce the potential for operator error and to eliminate the need to continue to stock parts and repair kits for a discontinued product. After further discussion with ODI, Fontaine Fifth Wheel has now decided to conduct the campaign as a

**Description of Remedy :**

Description of Remedy Program : Fontaine Fifth Wheel will replace all Ultra LT fifth wheel units in the field at no charge with its Ultra NT model fifth wheel.

How Remedy Component Differs from Recalled Component : The replacement fifth wheel is a different model fifth wheel with a different fifth wheel lock.

Identify How/When Recall Condition was Corrected in Production : Not applicable, production end for the Ultra LT fifth wheel in May of 2013.

**Recall Schedule :**

Description of Recall Schedule : NR

Planned Dealer Notification Date : AUG 24, 2015 - SEP 14, 2015

Planned Owner Notification Date : AUG 24, 2015 - OCT 02, 2015

**Purchaser Information :**

The following manufacturers purchased this defective/noncompliant equipment for possible use or installation in new motor vehicles or new items of motor vehicle equipment:

Name : Daimler Trucks NA  
Address : 4747 Channel Ave.  
Portland OR 97217  
Country : US  
Company Phone : (503) 745-8000

Name : Volvo Trucks NA  
Address : 7900 National Service Road  
Greensboro NC 27402  
Country : US  
Company Phone : (336) 393-2000

Name : Mack Truck  
Address : NR  
7825 National Service Road Greensboro NC 27409  
Country : US  
Company Phone : (908) 291-9001

Name : Navistar  
Address : 2701 Navistar Drive Lisle  
Lisle IL 60532  
Country : US  
Company Phone : 331-332-5000

Name : Kenworth Truck Co  
Address : 0630 N.E 38th PL Kirkland, WA 98033  
Kirkland WA 98033  
Country : US  
Company Phone : 4258285000

Name : Peterbilt Motors Co  
Address : 1700 Woodbrook Street  
Denton TX 76205  
Country : US  
Company Phone : 9405914000

\* NR - Not Reported