



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

April 11, 2012

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Eshoo:

Thank you for your letter, cosigned by Congressman Henry A. Waxman, regarding complaints from drivers concerning front suspension vibration, often referred to as a “shimmy,” in Model Year (MY) 2005-2010 Jeep Wranglers.

Each year, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) receives tens of thousands of complaints from consumers concerning a multitude of vehicle and vehicle equipment concerns. We review these complaints, along with additional information such as Early Warning Reporting data and technical service bulletins (TSBs). We screen for potential safety-related defects, conduct follow-up and additional research as needed and, where appropriate, open formal safety defect investigations.

Under the Motor Vehicle Safety Act, NHTSA has the authority to act when it discovers a safety-related defect. NHTSA’s pre-investigative screening process assesses whether a particular condition indicates the likelihood of a safety-related defect to warrant initiating a formal investigation. The assessment relies on a variety of factors including the nature of the condition in question, the frequency of the occurrence, and the severity of the consequences.

NHTSA has reviewed complaints concerning front suspension shimmy in the MY 2005-2010 Jeep Wrangler. Complainants typically report experiencing shimmy symptoms at speeds above 45 miles per hour (mph), frequently after traveling over a bump such as a pothole or an expansion joint in the roadway. As of this writing, NHTSA has identified 402 relevant complaints out of a total vehicle population of 542,134 MY 2005-2010 Jeep Wranglers. Of those, we have identified two possibly relevant crashes, one of which alleged non-fatal injuries. NHTSA continues to gather information on these complaints.

These complaints indicate that the shimmy tends to worsen over time, and that multiple and expensive repair attempts are frequently needed to resolve the shimmy. Nevertheless, the complaint narratives indicate that, while the condition is disconcerting to drivers, it does not result in loss of control such as the vehicle moving out of its travel lane.

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The shimmy has been observed in vehicles equipped with a solid front axle and coil spring suspensions (as opposed to an independent or leaf spring front suspensions). NHTSA reviewed this condition in an earlier investigation of this type of vehicle in EA08-007 (MY 2005-2007 Ford F-250/F350 Superduty), found no basis for a safety recall at that time, and identified worn suspension components and inadequate front tire pressure as contributing factors.

Given the similarities of the conditions reviewed, as well as the nature of the complaints and other information received, NHTSA does not believe this particular condition indicates the likelihood of a safety-related defect that would warrant a formal investigation. NHTSA will continue to monitor this condition and will take additional action if further information or developments warrant.

A similar response has been sent to Congressman Waxman. If you have any further questions, please contact Nancy L. Lewis, Associate Administrator for Enforcement at (202)366-3217.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. L. Strickland". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "D" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David L. Strickland

Enclosures:
Questions and Answers
Technical Service Bulletins