



July 6, 2011

11V-350  
(4 Pages)

Mr. Claude Harris  
Associate Administrator for Enforcement  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
Recall Management Division (NVS-215)  
Room: W48-302  
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Harris:

Attached is Chrysler Group LLC's ("Chrysler") Defect Information Report, complying with the requirements of 49 CFR Part 573, Defect and Noncompliance Reports, which contains details of a voluntary safety recall.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David D. Dillon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David D. Dillon

Enclosure: Defect Information Report

cc: Frank Boris, NHTSA

# DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT FOR CHRYSLER GROUP LLC

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**Submission Date:** July 6, 2011

## **573.6(c)(1): Manufacturer's Name, Brand Name**

Chrysler Group LLC, Dodge, Ram

## **573.6(c)(2): Identification of Affected Vehicles**

Make(s)	Model(s)	Model Year(s)	Inclusive Dates of Manufacture
Dodge	Ram 2500/3500 4x4	2008 - 2011	Feb. 14, 2008 – March 28, 2011
Dodge	Ram 3500 Cab Chassis 4x2	2008 - 2011	Feb. 14, 2008 – March 28, 2011
Dodge	Ram 1500 Mega Cab 4x4	2008	Feb. 14, 2008 – August 15, 2008
Dodge	Ram 2500/3500	2003-2008	Received the affected tie rod assembly in service

## **573.6(c)(2)(iv): Component manufacturer name, address, telephone number, and country of origin:**

Powers & Sons  
44700 Helm St  
Plymouth, MI 48170

## **573.6(c)(3): Potentially Affected Vehicle Population**

168,458 (approximate) 2008-2011 MY  
74,322 (approximate) 2003-2008 MY vehicles that received the affected tie rod assembly in service

## **573.6(c)(4): Percentage of Affected Vehicles**

Unknown

## **573.6(c)(5): Description of Defect or Noncompliance**

Some Ram 2500/3500 4x4, 3500 cab chassis 4x2 and 4x2 and 1500 Mega Cab 4x4 vehicles may experience a fracture of the left tie rod ball stud. This condition tends to occur during low speed parking lot type maneuvers when the customer is making a tight turn. Nonetheless, this condition could result in the potential loss of directional stability in the left hand front wheel and increase the risk of a crash.

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### **573.6(c)(6): Chronology of Principal Events Leading to Determination of a Safety Defect**

- On February 14, 2008, the 2008 MY Ram steering system architecture was changed to a 'cross car' linkage with a reverse pin tie rod at the right knuckle to improve steering performance.
- Shortly after the production change, the new cross car linkage was released to service steering linkage components for similarly equipped 2003-2008 Ram vehicles.
- In January of 2011, Chrysler announced a safety recall of Ram 4500/5500 vehicles to replace the left outer tie rod. At that time, Chrysler believed the 2500/3500 4x4 steering linkage to be unaffected as it was a different design.
- In March of 2011, it was discovered that the 2500/3500 4x4 vehicles may warrant further analysis to determine whether a field condition existed and Chrysler opened an investigation.
- A subsequent investigation revealed an elevated number of complaints for left tie rod fracture starting in January of 2011 for the affected 2500 / 3500 vehicles.
- Conversations with NHTSA, in March of 2011, indicated that customers were reporting conditions similar to those reported leading to the 4500/5500 recall; Chrysler indicated that an internal investigation had already been initiated.
- Chrysler's investigation determined that tie rod fracture was due to a weakening of the ball stud as a result of articulating beyond its designed window causing contact with the housing prior to reaching the full intended turn angle. This was a result of misalignment of the left ball stud in relation to the right ball stud. On March 28, 2011, as a precaution, the front end alignment process was enhanced to orient the tie rods during the toe set procedure for production vehicles.
- On April 4, 2011, Chrysler received correspondence from NHTSA that PE11-009 had been opened concerning outer steering tie rods on 2008-2011 MY Ram 2500/3500 4x4 vehicles.
- Analysis of complaints revealed an unusual increase in reports of left outer tie rod ball studs fracturing; there is no evidence of an issue for the right outer tie rod.
- The number of claims that may be related to the condition is included in Chrysler's response to PE11-009 submitted to NHTSA on June 30, 2011.
- On June 28, 2011, information relating to this investigation was presented to the Vehicle Regulations Committee, which decided to conduct a voluntary safety recall to inspect the subject vehicles for relative orientation and replace as required the left outer tie rod. A toe set procedure will also be performed using an outer tie rod inclinometer tool.

### **573.6(c)(7): Information Used in Determination of a Noncompliance**

N/A

### **573.6(c)(8): Description of Remedy**

Chrysler Group LLC will conduct a voluntary safety recall to inspect the vehicle's tie rod ends for relative orientation, replace the left outer tie rod as

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required and perform a front end toe alignment as needed.

Chrysler has a longstanding policy and practice of reimbursing owners who have incurred the cost of repairing a problem that subsequently becomes the subject of a field action. To ensure consistency, Chrysler, as part of the owner letter, will request that customers send the original receipt and/or other adequate proof of payment to the company for confirmation of the expense.

### **573.6(c)(10): Dealer and Owner Communications**

Chrysler has not yet determined when it will begin notification of dealers and owners in. Chrysler will provide the dealer and owner letters when available.

### **573.6(c)(11): Manufacturer's Campaign Number**

Chrysler has assigned recall number L16 to this action.