

Defect Information Report (Section 573.6)

FL-900

Date of Submission: *September 2, 2021*

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: *2019* **Model Yr. End:** *2021*

Make: Freightliner

Model: Classic Cascadia

Production Dates: **Begin:** *04/01/2018* **End:** *12/31/2018*

Descriptive Information: All Classic Cascadia built at the Santiago Manufacturing Plant within the production date range.

Model: Cascadia

Production Dates: **Begin:** *04/01/2018* **End:** *07/14/2020*

Descriptive Information: All Cascadia built at the Saltillo Manufacturing Plant within the production date range.

Number potentially involved: 105,183 **Estimated percentage of involve with defect:** *1%*

Defect / Noncompliance Description

For this Defect/Noncompliance:

Describe the defect or noncompliance:

On certain vehicles, the drag link taper joint at the steering arm may not have been tightened sufficiently and may come loose, potentially resulting in a complete separation of the joint.

Describe the safety risk:

A gradual loosening and separation of this joint could lead to a complete loss of steering control which could lead to a crash.

Identify any warning which can precede or occur:

A loose joint may be detected by loose steering, wandering, noises or vibration.

If applicable, identify the manufacture of the defective or noncompliant component.: N/A

Involved Components

Component Name: Drag Link Taper Joint

Component Description: Linkage point where the drag link attaches to the steering arm of the front axle

Component Part Number: 14-19428-000; 14-19429-000; 14-19512-000; 14-19513-000; 14-20690-000; 14-18527-000; 14-18528-000; 14-17298-000; 14-17300-000

Chronology of Defect / Noncompliance Determination

Provide the chronology of events leading up to the defect decision or test data for the noncompliance decision.: In or about April 2020, DTNA received a field report indicating loose steering in 5 units from the same customer fleet. Based on this report, DTNA initiated an inspection campaign on the customer fleet. In or about June 2020, DTNA received a field report that 2 units owned by a different customer had experienced a complete separation of the drag link from the steering arm. In or around June through September 2020, DTNA investigated the issue, which included a look at manufacturing processes, supplier quality and driver safety. The investigation led to the implementation of torque management and audit tools in all plants. At this time, DTNA did not reasonably determine an unreasonable risk to safety. In or around February 2021, 2 more customers reported loose steering due to the taper joint connection in vehicles built before the corrective action was implemented. DTNA promptly launched a deeper investigation into the same issue and found 7 more reports of complete separations through warranty claim information. In the April through August date range DTNA broadened the search finding 757 total reports and within this time 2 more separation occurred, bringing the total to 11. DTNA investigated the connection between the torque management and audit tool implementation and the loose tapered joint and reviewed warranty claim, field report and field inspection data; combined with a second look at supplier quality. On August 30, 2021, DTNA decided to conduct a safety recall on the above referenced vehicles.

Identify the Remedy

Describe the defect/noncompliance remedy program, including the manufacture's plan for reimbursement. The taper joint will be inspected, tested for accurate torque and repaired as necessary. Repairs will be performed by Daimler Trucks North America authorized service facilities. Details of the reimbursement plan will be included in the owner's notification letter.

Identify the Recall Schedule

Describe the recall schedule for notifications.: Customer notification will be made by first class mail using Daimler Trucks North America records to determine the customers affected.

Planned Dealer Notification Begin Date: 10/31/2021
Planned Dealer Notification End Date: 10/31/2021
Planned Owner Notification Begin Date: 10/31/2021
Planned Owner Notification End Date: 10/31/2021

Manufacture's identification code for this recall (if applicable): FL-900

DTNA Representative;

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Stoffels", is centered below the text "DTNA Representative;". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Larissa Stoffels
Executive Manager, Vehicle Safety
Compliance and Regulatory Affairs