
CENTER FOR AUTO SAFETY

1825 CONNECTICUT AVENUE NW SUITE 330 WASHINGTON DC 20009-5708
202-328-7700 ◆ www.autosafety.org

May 22, 2013

John Elkann, Chairman
Fiat SpA
250 Via Nizza
Turin, Italy 10126

Sergio Marchionne, Chairman
Chrysler Group LLC
1000 Chrysler Drive
Auburn Hills MI 48321-8004

Dear Chairmen Elkann & Marchionne:

Throughout America children are dying in Jeeps in rear-impact fire crashes. On February 12, 2006, 4-year old Cassidy Jarmon was killed when the 1993 Jeep Grand Cherokee driven by her mother was struck from behind and burst into flames. On March 6, 2012, 4-year old Remington Cole Walden was killed when the 1999 Jeep Grand Cherokee driven by his aunt was struck from behind and engulfed in flames. On May 9, 2011, 22-month old Cole Hazleton was killed when the 1966 Cherokee driven by his mother was struck from behind and burst in flames. All burned to death trapped in child seats designed to protect them. All other passengers survived.



Cassidy Jarmon



Cole Hazleton



Remington Cole Walden

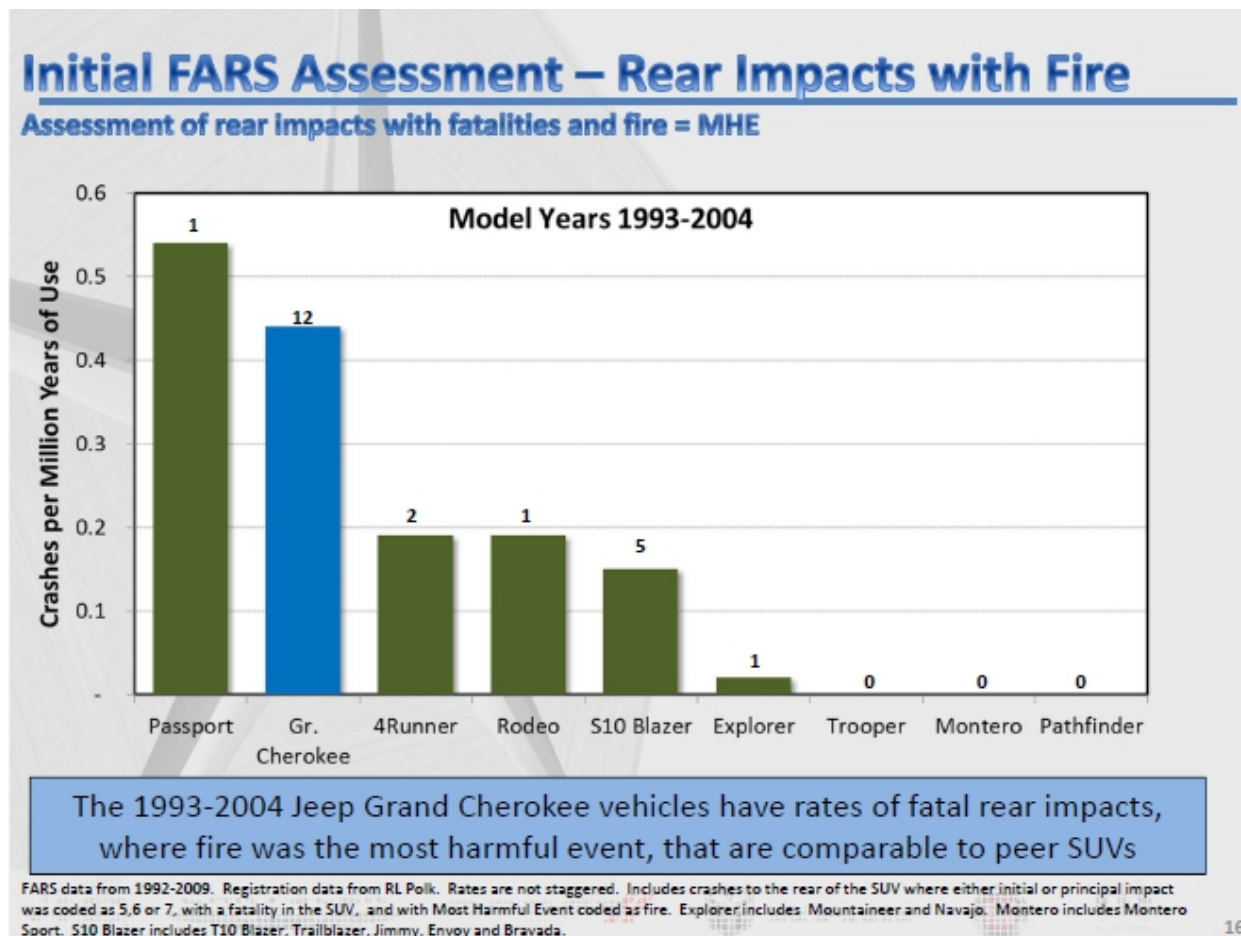
While Chrysler has done nothing to prevent children from burning to death in Jeeps with defective fuel systems behind the rear axle, heroes have stepped forward risking their lives to save children and others in burning Jeeps. In January 2012, honor guards escorting a fallen Afghanistan warrior pulled Ana Pina's 6-year old twins from their child seats in her burning Jeep Cherokee that was hit from behind. In October 2012, Jenelle Embrey's father pulled Zachary Santor from a flaming 1998 Jeep Grand Cherokee but before he could rescue Zachary's mother Heather Santor the whole Jeep erupted flame. Zachary watched his mother burn to death. Can you imagine how horrible that is? Or how horrible it was for Cassidy's and Cole's mothers and Remington's aunt to watch them burn to death?

These are but some of the terrible stories of 349 fatal fire crashes of [1993-2004 Jeep Grand Cherokees](#), [1993-2001 Jeep Cherokees](#) and [2002-2007 Jeep Libertys](#) that have resulted in 478 deaths, at least 157 of which are deaths due to fire. There has not been a single confirmed fire death since Chrysler moved the fuel tanks from behind the rear axle in 2005 for the Grand Cherokee and 2008 for the Liberty.

Ralph Nader personally brought the Jeep Grand Cherokee fuel system defect to the attention of Fiat Chief Engineer Harald Wester in Milano, Italy on January 26, 2011 and outlined a simple and inexpensive recalled remedy:

Just like Ford recalled the Pinto, Fiat needs to recall the Grand Cherokee and remedy the fuel tank defect by installing (1) an optional frame rail reinforcement bracket on the 1993-1998 Grand Cherokee, (2) optional skid plates on all 1993-2004 Grand Cherokees that do not have them, (3) an effective check valve system to shut off the flow of gasoline if the filler hose is pulled out of the fuel tank or filler neck, and (4) additional shields to protect the fuel tank from sharp objects in the crush zone impacts. To ensure these inexpensive remedies are adequate, Fiat should conduct a public crash test program just as was done for the Ford Pinto recall.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) opened a high-level defect investigation ([EA12-005](#)) into all of these Jeeps on June 12, 2012 after Chrysler made a presentation to NHTSA showing that the Grand Cherokee was 20 times more likely to be involved in a fatal rear-impact fire crash where fire was the most harmful event (MHE) than its closest competitor, the Ford Explorer. Since Chrysler omitted at least three fatal rear-impact fire crashes where fire was the cause of death from this chart (Rodney Wood – MHE fire) and (Jose Sierra and Cassidy Jarmon – autopsy), the Grand Cherokee is 27 times more likely than the Explorer to be involved in a fatal rear-impact fire crash with death due to fire.



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A series of Federal Highway Administration crash tests showed the Explorer had no fuel tank system damage when rear-impacted by a Ford Taurus at 70MPH but the Grand Cherokee suffered major fuel damage at 50 MPH when rear-impacted by a Ford Taurus. The Center for Auto Safety did the same test with a Ford Taurus at just 40 MPH, with the Grand Cherokee suffering fuel tank rupture.

Chrysler's primary defense is that the Jeeps met the fuel tank safety standard. But so did the Ford Pinto. Ford recalled the Pinto. Chrysler should recall the Jeeps. Chrysler's other defense is when one looks at all non-death by fire crashes including electrical, brake or power steering fluid fires, the Jeep is not so bad. Those other fires are not nearly as likely to cause a fire death for the simple reason that vehicle occupants have time to escape or the trauma of the crash kills the occupant, not the fire. Chrysler also compares its Jeeps to smaller vehicles which are more likely to have a trauma death. [General Motors apologized to NHTSA](#) for making a similar misleading comparison in the side-saddle fuel tank pickup investigation.

American heroes have done more to save Jeep occupants from fiery deaths than Chrysler, which has stonewalled NHTSA's efforts to get a recall. As CEOs of Chrysler and its parent Fiat, you have the power to save more people from dying by fire by recalling these Jeeps. As individuals with families, surely you have compassion for the little children who have died in Jeep fires. We ask you to do recall the 1993-2004 Jeep Grand Cherokees, 1993-2001 Jeep Cherokees and 2002-2007 Jeep Libertys before more little children die.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Clarence Ditlow".

Clarence Ditlow
Executive Director