

NWCG Logistics/Equipment Management Committee

Equipment Advisory: 26-001

July 7, 2026



To: Wildland Firefighting Community

From: Nathan Hesse, Chair, NWCG Equipment/Technology Subcommittee

Subject: Potential Front Driveline Joint Failure on 2018 and Earlier Ram Pickups

Issue:

Certain 2018 and earlier Ram pickup trucks equipped with an affected 2-piece cardan joint on the front driveline have experienced catastrophic joint failure. When the joint fails, the driveline can strike and damage surrounding components, including brake lines, fuel lines, and wiring harness. This damage may result in loss of braking and could increase the risk of a vehicle fire. Refer to Technical Service Bulletin (TSB) 03-002-21 to identify affected chassis.

Action:

Follow all Ram-issued inspection, maintenance, and service guidance for front driveline joints. As an additional risk mitigation measure, consider installing a driveline loop. A driveline loop can help contain the driveline in the event of joint failure and reduce the likelihood of secondary damage to critical vehicle components. Coordinate with fleet managers and service providers to determine the most appropriate driveline loop kit for each vehicle.

Background:

Multiple U.S. Forest Service regions have reported front driveline double cardan joint failure incidents during operation. These failures have caused extensive damage to chassis components, including severed brake lines resulting in loss of braking. At least one incident resulted in a post-failure vehicle fire.

Additional Information:

Refer to TSB 03-002-21 (included in this advisory):

<https://www.stellantisfleet.com/BodyBuilder/service/Bulletinshtml?bulletinID=22>.

Both universal and vehicle-specific driveline loop kits are available to help reduce collateral damage in the event of a driveline joint failure. Fleet managers and maintenance personnel should evaluate available options to determine the most appropriate installation for their fleet.

See the attached TSB and accompanying photos on the following pages.

Contact: Chris Loraas, USFS WO Fire and Aviation National Fire Fleet Program Manager (acting), christopher.loraas@usda.gov or 406-370-4160; or Manuel Perez, NTDP Equipment Specialist, manuel.perez@usda.gov or 909-929-7061.

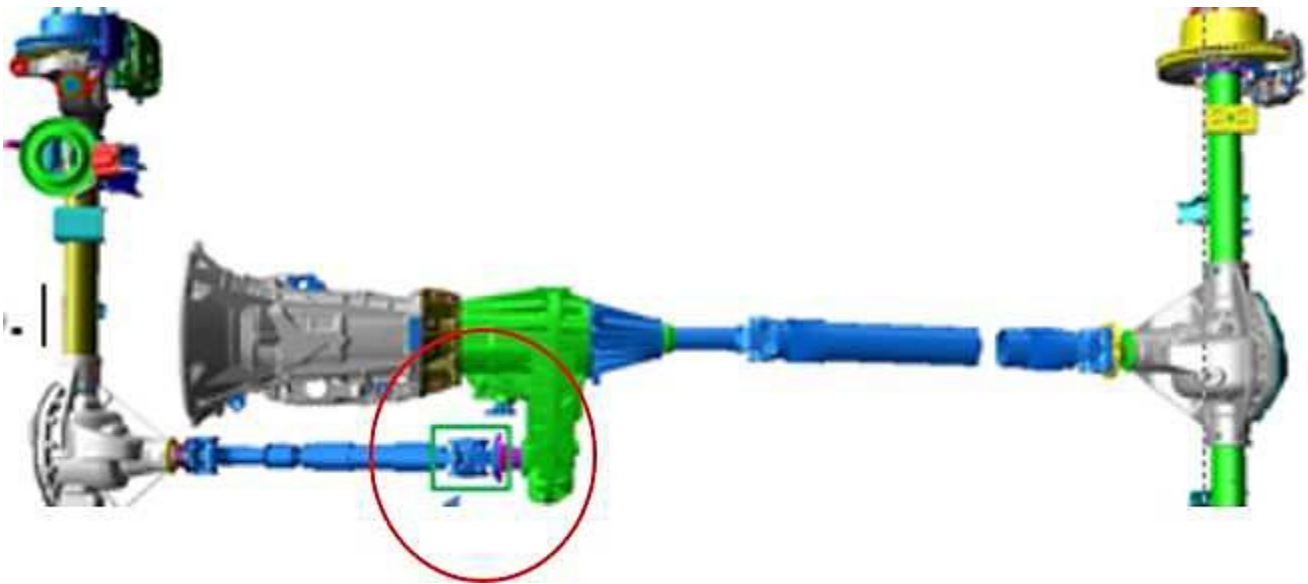
The following two pages are the referenced TSB from Stellantis

TSB NUMBER:
03-002-21

OVERVIEW:

Due to lack of proper maintenance, failures of the ("u-joint") have occurred on some heavy duty Ram front drive shafts double cardan universal joints.

Figure 1: Image of the front drive shaft double cardan universal joint.



MODELS:

2011 2018	DJ RAM 2500 Pickup
2011 2018	D2 RAM 3500 Pickup
2011 2018	DD RAM 3500 Cab Chassis
2011 2018	DP RAM 4500/5500 Cab Chassis
2016 2018	DF RAM 3500 <10K Cab Chassis

NOTES:

1. This bulletin applies to four-wheel drive vehicles equipped with Manual Shift On The Fly Transfer Case (Sales Code DK1) or Electronic Shift On The Fly Transfer Case (Sales Code DK3).
2. This bulletin applies to vehicles within the following markets/countries: North America, LATAM, APAC and EMEA.
3. Proper maintenance at the required intervals will greatly reduce the potential for premature double cardan joint failure.

Stellantis TSB continued

DISCUSSION:

The joint must be lubricated with a needle nose grease gun adapter during scheduled maintenance every 12874 km (8000 miles) (gas engine) or 12070 km (7500 miles) (diesel engine).

Figure 2: Image of the needle nose grease gun adapter.



Lubricate the double cardan joint per the maintenance schedule using MOPAR type MS6560 lithium-based grease or an equivalent. Lubrication requirements are detailed in service information and the owner's manual. There is an under-hood reminder sticker on the left front fender.

Figure 3: Images of the under-hood reminder sticker.



The double cardan joint is equipped with a low-profile needle point grease fitting. The needle point greasing adapter tool is included in the MOPAR Express Lane tool kit and is readily available through other tool providers. Inspect the double cardan joint near the transfer case front output shaft during service. Check for signs of distress include gaps in the bearing area and rusty powder on the yoke surfaces and repair as necessary.

End of Stellantis TSB

Figure 4: Photo of damage after driveline joint failure.



Figure 5: Photo of damage after driveline joint failure.



Figure 6: Driveline loop kit example (Five Nine Fabrication).

