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SAFETY

Jeep involved in fatal Anton Yelchin accident was subject of safety recall

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Gear selectors from 2014 Jeep Grand Cherokee (Left) and 2017 Jeep Grand Cherokee (Right) (Jeep)

The Jeep Grand Cherokee involved in [the accident that killed 'Star Trek' actor Anton Yelchin](#) in Los Angeles on Sunday was one of [1.1 million Fiat Chrysler vehicles worldwide subject to a recall](#) to address a transmission design flaw that was cited in several similar incidents, though none fatal.

According to police, Yelchin died from blunt force asphyxia when he got out of the vehicle and it rolled down his driveway and pinned him against a brick mailbox and a security fence. His 2015 Grand Cherokee featured an uncommon type of electronic gear selector that works like a self-centering toggle to cycle through the transmission's modes (park, reverse, neutral and drive,) rather than a lever with notches or specific positions for each.

Related Image



The driveway to the home of Anton Yelchin, a rising actor, best known for playing Chekov in the new "Star Trek" films, is seen in the Studio City area of Los Angeles, on Sunday, June 19, 2016. Yelchin was killed by his own car as it rolled down his driveway early Sunday, police and his publicist said. The car pinned Yelchin, 27, against a brick mailbox pillar and a security fence at his home in Los Angeles, Officer Jenny Hosier said. He had gotten out of the vehicle momentarily, but police did not say why he was behind it when it started rolling. (AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes)

Hundreds of owners filed complaints with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that it was confusing to use. Several had exited their vehicles without having engaged Park as intended, leading to rollaway events despite warning lights and sounds designed to prevent this from happening.

In April, Fiat Chrysler reported that there had been 41 injuries related to the problem and issued a recall for 2014-2015 Grand Cherokees with the 8-speed transmission to update their software to give enhanced warnings and prevent the vehicles from moving if a door is opened when it is not in Park. The 2012-2014 Dodge Charger and Chrysler 300 sedans that used the same gear selector were also recalled. Fiat Chrysler now uses a more conventional lever in all three models.

It's not yet known if Yelchin's Grand Cherokee had been brought in for the recall service prior to the accident, but the LAPD says it is trying to determine whether or not the car was in Park when the accident occurred. [TMZ](#) has reported that the vehicle had not received the update and was in neutral at the time of the accident.

"FCA US extends its most sincere condolences to the family and friends of Mr. Yelchin," the automaker said in a statement regarding the accident. "The Company is in contact with the authorities and is conducting a thorough investigation. It is premature to speculate on the cause of this tragedy."

Police do not suspect foul play in the accident, and that toxicology reports could take months to analyze.