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Jeep® Compass Makes Sure Customers Find Highest Quality Levels

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The Jeep® Compass is a dramatic interpretation of a classic brand footprint. Hours and miles of testing, preparation and process have taken place to ensure this latest chapter in Jeep Heritage reflects only the highest level of quality.

Extensive testing was conducted on Jeep Compass during pre-production, making it one of the brand's most solid vehicles. Countless hours of wind noise and aerodynamic evaluations, as well as many other related tests were conducted in the Chrysler Group's \$37.5-million state-of-the-art aerodynamic and acoustic test facility.

"Our customers have extremely high expectations of durability and reliability from our Jeep brand vehicles," said Stephen Walukas, Vice President – Corporate Quality. "Chrysler Group is dedicated—with full support of senior management—to providing the highest quality at every level of production, and for a Jeep vehicle, that means the durability to handle a variety of on- and off-road situations."

The 2007 Jeep Compass was designed and engineered under the Chrysler Development System (CDS), the comprehensive, coordinated and disciplined product creation process that improves quality and speed-to-market while reducing costs and encouraging practical innovation in new products.

Emphasized on CDS are the systems engineering, design and up-front planning to avoid time-consuming and costly trial and error or changes during the latter phases of the product development cycle. With CDS, all product and process planning is completed and fully integrated before production tooling begins.

The proof is in the Jeep Compass' rigorous test schedule:

- The Jeep Compass went through durability tests of more than 100,000 customer-equivalent miles
- More than 100,000-miles/10-years simulation of corrosion-protection testing was conducted on the Compass to ensure a long-lasting appearance
- The efficient new 2.4-liter World Engine was tested with more than a combined 15 million customer-equivalent miles between Chrysler Group, Mitsubishi Motor Corp., and Hyundai Motor Co. to ensure the highest level of reliability
- The Compass' CVT2 transaxle has been tested to more than 150,000 miles to ensure lasting durability

From the highest elevations to the coldest, northernmost parts of the world, engineers also tested Jeep Compass in the most extreme conditions to simulate difficult real-world driving conditions. Test trips included cross-country drives through heat and humidity to freezing cold conditions in the Arctic and high altitudes in the Southwest and Northern Canada.

Crashing through Quality Gates

The Jeep Compass program and its dedicated engineers have made the vehicle one of the highest quality vehicles to be launched from the company. The Compass is another in a series of vehicles at the Chrysler Group to meet all 12 levels of the Quality Gates process.

Quality Gates is a process that was adopted as part of the best-practice synergies produced by the DaimlerChrysler merger. Prior to the merger, Chrysler utilized the Chrysler Development System to ensure quality from the vehicle's sketch stage in Design, through concept and prototypes to testing and ultimately to production at the plant.

However, the merger allowed the inclusion of the Quality Gates process, a system that requires a 12-step checks-and-balance review of the project at critical stages of development by senior management.

“The Quality Gates are a direct example of an exchange of best practices we had with our merger,” Walukas said. “Quality Gates enhanced CDS and made the entire process more robust. The result is technology in testing and validation that gave us the speed to stop a project when we saw even a potential issue, fix it right the first time and still get to market with the highest possible quality.”

Overall, the entire company has benefited from the intensified focus on quality as Chrysler Group has seen a 46-percent improvement in expense per vehicle (EPUS) from the period just prior to the company's turnaround (approx. 1998-2001 model year) to the 2005 model year. In external metrics, the Chrysler Group brands continue to make dramatic year-over-year improvements.

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