



U.S. Department of Transportation  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

**DOT Auto Safety Hotline**  
**Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire**  
To Report Vehicle Safety Defects  
1-888-DASH-2-DOT  
(1-888-327-4236)  
INTERNET: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 100079

Date Received

Repository

2003 MAR 17 AM 11:50  
06 FEB 2003 11:50

Reference No.  
10006697

**OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)**

Name

Address

City CHEVY CHASE

State MD

Zip Code

Daytime Telephone Number

E-mail Address

Evening Telephone Number

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of this report to the manufacturer of your vehicle?  YES  NO  
In the absence of an author address to the vehicle manufacturer.  
Signature of Owner \_\_\_\_\_ Date 1/1

**VEHICLE INFORMATION**

Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of instrument or driver's side  
WVWPC63B32P015315

Make VOLKSWAGEN

Model PASSAT

Production 2007

Date Purchased 8/7/01

Dealer's Name and Telephone Number Alexandria Volkswagen

Engine: No. Cylinders 4

Fuel Type: Premium Unleaded

Original Owner

Dealer's City Alexandria

State VA

Zip Code

Transmission Type Standard

Antilock Brakes  
 Cruise Control

Powertrain

Vehicle Component Code  
116000 ELECTRICAL SYSTEM:IGNITION

Multiple Failures: 2

**FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION**

Incident Date(s) 06-FEB-2003

Failure Mileage 114,590  
115,333

Failure Speed

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE**

Tire Make

Tire Model (Name or Number)

Tire Size (Example P215/65R15)

DOT No. (Example: DOTM19ABC036)

Original Equipment  
 Prior Repair

Failure Location:

Tire Component Code

Tire Failure Type

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A CHILD SEAT FAILURE**

Make:

Date Manufactured:

Model No./Name:

Seat Type:

Installation System:

Child Seat Component Code:

Failed Part:

**APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION**

(Please describe in detail the incident, failure(s), crash(es), and injury(ies).)

Crash

Yes  No

Fire

Yes  No

Number of Persons Injured 0

Number of Deaths 0

Reported to Police N

Narrative Description of Incident(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies).  
Please describe (1) events leading up to the failure, (2) failure and its consequences, and (3) what was done to correct the failure; i.e., parts repaired or replaced (and if old part is available).

DEALER CHANGED THE FAULTY COIL PACK BUT IT FAILED TWO WEEK LATER. THE SAME PROBLEM WITH THE SAME COIL. DEALER REFUSE TO CHANGE THE OTHER THREE COIL. PLEASE PROVIDE FURTHER INFORMATION. PH. - SEE ATTACHED

Volkswagon of America Refused to allow the dealers to replace the coils. Both dealers were willing to replace the other 3 coils but Volkswagen of America would not authorize or supply the parts.

Include, if available: Police/Fire Department Report, Photos, and Repair Invoice.

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY.

The Privacy Act of 1974-Public Law 93-599 This information is requested pursuant to authority vested in the National Highway Traffic Safety Act and subsequent amendments. You are under no obligation to respond to this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist the NHTSA in determining whether a Manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If the NHTSA proceeds with administrative enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**Chevy Chase, MD.**

**My complaint/dispute is with Volkswagen of America (not the dealers who have repaired my vehicle on two different occasions). VW of America has refused to authorize and pay for all the replacement of ignition coils.**

### **DETAILED DESCRIPTION AND CHRONOLOGY**

1) On Sunday December 1, 2002, the Malfunction Indicator Light (MIL) warning light began flashing on my dashboard, accompanied by a dramatic loss in power and the engine ran very rough. The following day I took the car to Martens Volkswagen Service in Bethesda, Maryland. On December 4<sup>th</sup>, the problem was diagnosed as a defective coil in cylinder #2. The dealer did not have any parts in stock and so replaced the coil with one from a new vehicle and the performance of the car returned to normal.

2) On Saturday December 14<sup>th</sup>, the MIL began to flash again, accompanied with the same drop in power. This second episode occurred in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. My wife and I had driven to Lancaster, PA on December 10<sup>th</sup> to adopt a child. Our daughter was discharged from the hospital on December 13<sup>th</sup> and we drove with our 2-day old infant to Carlisle, PA. The car broke down the day after we arrived in Carlisle. I waited until Monday morning and called the nearest Volkswagen dealer, Cumberland Valley Motors (CVM), and explained the problem and arranged to have the car serviced. I called Volkswagen Roadside Assistance and the car was towed to the dealer about 15 miles away in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.

3) I told the service manager at Cumberland Valley Motors that if it turned out to be a repeat of the coil problem that I wanted to have the coils in all four cylinders replaced. The service manager told me that it was Volkswagen's policy to replace only the broken parts. I explained that two of five coils had already malfunctioned, a forty-percent failure rate, and that I wanted all the coils replaced. It was obvious that all the coils came from the same lot and that it was merely a question of when, not if, the other coils would fail. I explained that I was 130 miles from home and that I did not want to break down again in the middle of winter, this time with a one-week old infant. The service manager was very understanding and said he would see what he could do. I offered to pay to have the three operating coils (working at least for the moment) replaced and take the matter up with Volkswagen after I returned to my home.

4) CVM called later that day and the diagnosis turned out to be the same – a defective coil in cylinder #2. CVM informed me that they did not have the replacement parts in stock. The service manager checked with his representative from VW of America and he was told that he could only repair the affected cylinder, but was not authorized to replace the other three coils. I repeated my offer to "pay now and grieve later" but to no avail.

5) On December 17<sup>th</sup>, a VW representative informed me that my case had been reviewed and that nothing could be done. I was transferred to a supervisor and I repeated my dilemma of being 130 miles away from home and the potential for serious peril that would be posed if we were to break down on the trip in the middle of winter traveling with our one-week old infant. Once again I was told that it was Volkswagen's policy to replace only the broken parts.

6) On December 18<sup>th</sup> I called the office of Mr. Klaus, CEO of Volkswagen of America and asked to speak with a representative who could override the VW repair policy. Mr. Chad Lyons returned my call later that day and said that my case had been reviewed, but

that VW would not authorize replacement of the coils. My wife, daughter, and I drove to our home in Chevy Chase, Maryland, on December 22<sup>nd</sup> in a loaner car while our vehicle remained at CMV waiting to be repaired.

7) On December 30<sup>th</sup> I faxed a letter to Volkswagen CEO Mr. Klaus restating the problem and the resolution I was seeking.

8) On December 31<sup>st</sup>, the service manager at CVM informed me that they had finally received and installed a replacement coil for cylinder #2, but that VW would still not allow them to replace the other coils.

9) On January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2003 I faxed a second letter to the Volkswagen CEO stating that the partial repair was not a complete or satisfactory action and that I did not consider the car to be either safe or roadworthy. I asked Mr. Klaus if it really was his position, as well as Volkswagen of America's policy, that I must break down three more times in order to have all the defective coils replaced.

10) On January 6<sup>th</sup>, I received a call from CVM that Volkswagen had agreed to transport my car back to my home. However, VW still declined to authorize and pay for the replacement of the other ignition coils.

11) On January 7<sup>th</sup> I spoke once again with VW representative Chad Lyons. I made an offer to make an appointment with Martens Volkswagen Service in Bethesda to have the coils replaced in thirty days. My request was denied.

12) My car arrived at my home on January 8<sup>th</sup>.

13) On January 13<sup>th</sup> I faxed a third letter to Mr. Klaus. I explained that I had made an appointment for February 7<sup>th</sup> because this was 30 days following the delivery of our car. February 7<sup>th</sup> was also over two months from the time the coil in cylinder #2 failed the first time. I explained that I understood that Volkswagen had an inventory problem. In giving Volkswagen an additional 30 days to complete the repair of our car, I felt that my wife and I were being very reasonable, patient, and flexible, given that we had already been adversely affected by this problem twice.

14) On January 21<sup>st</sup> I heard from VW Chad Lyons in response to my most recent letter and that Volkswagen still would not authorize and pay for the replacement of the ignition coils in cylinders 1, 3, and 4.

15) I have not been able to satisfactorily resolve this matter with Volkswagen of America and therefore I now seek the assistance of the Maryland Consumer Protection Division to compel Volkswagen of America to authorize and pay the replacement of the ignition coils in cylinders 1, 3, and 4.

**THE ATTACHMENTS TO THIS  
DOCUMENT HAVE BEEN REMOVED  
TO PROTECT UNWARRANTED  
INVASION OF PERSONAL PRIVACY  
PURSUANT TO EXEMPTION 6 OF  
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION  
ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(6).**