



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 335

Date Received: 07-MAR-2002
2002 MAY 27
Repository:
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OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name: [Redacted] (daughter is owner of vehicle)
Address: [Redacted]
City: MELBOURNE State: FL Zip Code: [Redacted]

Daytime Telephone Number: [Redacted] 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 authorization, NHTSA WILL NOT provide your name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.
Signature of Owner: _____ Date: ____/____/____

VEHICLE INFORMATION

17 digit vehicle identification number located at bottom of dashboard: 1G1UC3249X7226380
Make: CHEVROLET Model: CAVALIER Model Year: 1999
Date Purchased: 04/14/2000 Dealer's Name and Telephone Number: Jim Rathmann Chevrolet 723-3611 Engine: No. Cylinders: 4 Fuel Type: Regular GAS
Original Owner: Dealer's City: Melbourne State: FL Zip Code: 32935
Transmission Type: Automatic Antilock Brakes Cruise Control Powertrain:
Vehicle Component Code: 061000 ENGINE AND ENGINE COOLING:ENGINE
Multiple Failure: 1

FAILED COMPONENT(S) / PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s): Failure Mileage: 25078 Failure Speed: 32935 - zip code?

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(s), failure(s), crash(es), and injury(ies).)

Crash: Yes No Fire: Yes No
Number of Persons Injured: Number of Deaths: 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).

WHEN THE CONSUMER SLOWED DOWN TO MAKE A TURN, THE ENGINE STALLED.*JB
Has occurred numerous times!
* See Attached service reports.

Include, if available: Police/Fire Department Report, Photos, and Repair Invoice. ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY.

The Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-502) 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 responses, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.

██████████
Melbourne, Florida ██████████
██

February 21, 2003

Dear Mr. Rathmann,

I am writing in hopes that you will do something about my daughter, ██████████'s car which we bought from your car lot in Melbourne. She purchased a tan, 1999 Chevy Cavalier on 14 April 2000. ██████████ has had it in to the shop numerous times for the same problem which has not been fixed. I am not usually one to complain, but this car problem has put my daughter's life in danger many times. The problem is that the car dies suddenly, usually when slowing and getting ready to make a left turn. This causes her to lose the ability to steer and does not allow her to get it off of the road quickly. Many times she has had to coast across the road in hopes that another car will not hit her. Living on our busy roads with high speed traffic, this is not a safe situation! ██████████ has almost gone into a ditch, and almost hit the sign to the entrance of our neighborhood. These mishaps were minor to what could have happened! She now gives herself enough room between cars in case the problem duplicates.

This seems to happen as often as twice in one week, twice a month, once a month, and as little as every other month. The last time I believe it actually went four months before cutting off again. We thought we had fixed the problem at that point but it has continued to duplicate sporadically since then.

Many people ask why we just don't trade it in for a new car. Our family of six is not one to trade in their cars every few years. We buy a car and keep it until it falls apart in order to save money and we can't afford to buy her another car at this time. My daughter picked out this car because she liked the car and that particular color. The car was quickly paid off so our daughter could afford to live on her own and pay for her college. We asked to have the car switched out with another car of the same year, mileage and color. Twice we checked into trading her car and the only cars that were available were priced higher than her car leaving her to pay the difference. They also wanted us to pay roughly seven hundred dollars in taxes in both instances. My daughter already paid these taxes when she first bought the car. It is not our fault that the

car is a lemon. We have given the mechanics many chances to fix the problem under the extended warranty that was also purchased, and they have yet to do so.

The problem with the service department is they can't get it to duplicate the problem. I told them at one time to keep it for the weekend and drive it till it does duplicate. They gave us a rental car and thankfully in the short, two day weekend, it did cut off on the mechanic. They replaced something and thought that would do it. After a few months the problem resurfaced yet again.

I want [REDACTED] out of this car and into a safe one with out any expense to her! The mechanic, Leslie Engeron, agreed with me that the car was dangerous and he even said he wouldn't want his daughter driving a car that did that! How would you feel if this was YOUR daughter driving this car?

This has been a long, frustrating and frightening experience for us. The only kind of response we have received from the service department is that of sympathy and agreement in that it is a dangerous car. The only options I see are to either let the mechanic drive the car once again until it duplicates, (which could take a while), GIVING us a rental car, or switch us out with another car at no expense. I feel this should be done because it has been an ongoing problem since we purchased the car.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

GM Vehicles Steering locks while driving.

I found these on internet - similar problems

5 makes and 22 models may be affected, GM denies knowledge of safety problem with apparent defective rack and pinion.

By Guy Cramer

While the defect with Ford Trucks and Firestone tires blowing out causing over 200 deaths and 700 injuries left us wondering who was to blame for this problem, the steering problem that GM has with a large number of 1997 vehicles may equal or surpass the Firestone problem and in this case there is no scapegoat.

Friends of mine allowed us the use of their 1997 Chevy Venture Minivan for the past few months. Recently my wife was driving home when the steering locked up on her and she started to cross the center line of traffic into oncoming vehicles. She was a short way from home and managed to regain control before hitting anything. Arriving home she stated that the problem happened three times on the way home.

I drove the vehicle down the street and sure enough making a left turn would cause the steering to lock. We took the vehicle to the dealership, Mussallem Chevrolet Oldsmobile Cadillac LTD in Maple Ridge, B.C. They concluded it was the rack and pinion and would replace it with the dealership covering 50% of the \$1,000+ repair cost. Dealerships don't normally cover 50% of a problem when a vehicle is past warranty unless there is something more to it.

I researched the problem on the internet and quickly found out that for them to cover 50% is an admission to guilt, did GM know about this problem?

I found that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) was investigating the rack and pinion on the Chevy Venture and 36 consumer complaints had been made to the NHTSA specifically regarding the steering locking on the 1997 Venture.

I meet with the Service Manager at the dealership, Larry Kilthau and showed him the complaints, however 50% was as high as the dealership would go. Larry provided me with the GM Customer Assistance Centre Phone number and I was quickly connected to Janice, a Manager of Customer Assistance. She listened and told me that no such problem with rack and pinion was listed with GM and no recall had been made. I told her that the problem was under investigation under NHTSA Action Number PE01-038. She informed me that was an American investigation and Canadian investigations through Transport Canada don't include U.S. problems and GM Canada only looks at Canadian problems. She was going to see if she could resolve the problem, however, I pointed out that unless they would do the same for all people with the same problem, not just this one case, I would inform the public about this lack of responsibility on GM's part.

I went to transport Canada website but they don't post complaints or investigations, only recalls. Considering the defensive reaction I received from the dealership and customer assistance, I wondered if this problem was more widespread than just the 97 Chevrolet Venture.

Going back onto the NHTSA web site, I discovered that the same investigation for Chevy Venture also included the 97 Chevy Malibu, 97 Oldsmobile Cutlass, 97 Oldsmobile Supreme, 97 Pontiac Grand Prix and 97 Pontiac Trans Port. I then researched all rack and pinion steering complaints on GM vehicles for 1997 and

found not just the 6 models under the NHTSA investigation but 22 models. There was a total of 179 separate complaints for rack and pinion steering problems in which 55 of those complaints, reported problems with steering problems when turning left. A number had resulted in accidents and injuries. Those in bold are under NHTSA investigation. All are 1997 vehicles.

Make: BUICK	Model: CENTURY
Make: BUICK	Model: LESABRE
Make: BUICK	Model: PARK AVENUE
Make: BUICK	Model: REGAL
Make: BUICK	Model: RIVIERA
Make: CADILLAC	Model: CONCOURS
Make: CADILLAC	Model: DEVILLE
Make: CADILLAC	Model: SEVILLE
Make: CHEVROLET	Model: CAVALIER
Make: CHEVROLET	Model: LUMINA
Make: CHEVROLET	Model: MALIBU
Make: CHEVROLET	Model: MONTE CARLO
Make: CHEVROLET TRUCK	Model: VENTURE
Make: OLDSMOBILE	Model: 88
Make: OLDSMOBILE	Model: ACHIEVA
Make: OLDSMOBILE	Model: CUTLASS
Make: OLDSMOBILE TRUCK	Model: SILHOUETTE
Make: PONTIAC	Model: BONNEVILLE
Make: PONTIAC	Model: GRAND AM
Make: PONTIAC	Model: GRAND PRIX
Make: PONTIAC	Model: SUNFIRE
Make: PONTIAC TRUCK	Model: TRANS SPORT

Buick (12), Cadillac (4), Chevrolet (69), Oldsmobile (11), Pontiac (82), Saab (0), Saturn (1)

Total GM Vehicles (179) (55 specifically reported problems with steering problems when turning left)

Considering I was able to quickly find other GM makes and models with the same problem is cause for concern, why are these other GM vehicles not under the same NHTSA investigation for rack and pinion?

If there are currently 179 complaints about rack and pinion in GM Vehicles and over 30% mention the problem happens when turning left indicates a design defect with the rack and pinion.

How many steering problems with the GM rack and pinion have not been reported to the NHTSA as the consumer is led to believe that it is only a problem with their vehicle, 10 times as many, 20 times or more? How many serious or fatal accidents might have been caused by this defect in which mechanical failure of the rack and pinion was not discovered as the accident would have destroyed the rack and pinion?

In a few cases it was reported that in the accident the driver side airbag malfunctioned or the dealer discovered the same when repairing the steering that the air bag could not deploy because of the rack and pinion problem. Not only do you unexpectedly lose control of the vehicle but if you do hit something your airbag may not deploy.

I have video taped the steering problem with this Venture so you can see just how dangerous this problem is. The video file is 2.4 MB in size [1997-Chevy-Venture-defective-steering.WMV](#)

This Chevy Venture shown in the video has not been repaired and will remain in its current state until at least June 30th 2002 for examination by the authorities. We will not drive the vehicle until it has been repaired.

Transport Canada lists the following:

Examples of safety-related defects:

- Steering components that may break suddenly, causing loss of vehicle control.

Manufacturer's responsibility

The *Motor Vehicle Safety Act* requires that vehicle, tire and child restraint manufacturers or importers notify Transport Canada, dealers and the owners of their products about any safety problems.

Is General Motors of Canada in violation of the Motor Vehicle Safety Act for not informing owners of the 1997 vehicles listed on this page of potential failure of steering related to the rack and pinion.

It is apparent from some of the complaints listed on the NHTSA site that some of the dealerships were aware that the rack and pinion problem exists on certain 1997 GM models. If the dealerships are seeing the problem that much, then why doesn't GM know about the problem.

The NHTSA should launch an internal inquiry to find out why other GM models and makes have not been included into Action Number PE01-038

The Canadian Federal Government should launch an investigation into General Motors of Canada concerning their knowledge about defective rack and pinion on 1997 models.

Repair records for Rack and Pinion from all GM dealerships should be obtained to find out how widespread this problem is. Accident records of 1997 GM vehicles that lost control or crossed into on coming traffic for unknown reasons should be reviewed to try to see if the rack and pinion failure may have caused the accident.

In the U.S. a full Congressional Investigation should be called into General Motors similar to the investigation launched when the firestone problem was discovered by the media. If it is determined that GM knew about this problem and refused to inform the owners or recall the vehicles until ordered to do so by the NHTSA, charges of negligence and negligence causing injury should be considered for General Motors Executives.

As a future vehicle consumer, I will avoid General Motors vehicles until changes are made to their policy regarding putting the safety of GM owners and occupants and all other drivers on the road that may be injured because a GM vehicle lost control due to a faulty rack and pinion only because a potential recall would reduce profit.

This paper is Part 1 to go to Part 2 [click here Police Chevrolet Impala Steering can lockup while driving at any speed](#)

I have collected and posted all 179 complaints to the NHTSA about GM Vehicle steering related to Rack and

Pinion problems here

For more papers on this and other related subjects;
● **Go back to the Main Page (The Y Files)** ●

The Truth is Stranger than Fiction

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00150

What things
have gone
wrong with the
car?

Had security system removed.

Electronic short in fuel pump.

Brakes replaces.

General
comments?

This car was very dangerous, and would shut down on the thruway going 55 miles an hour, four mechanic's later, and a lot of money, they now tell me there is an electronic short to the fuel pump. Let's hope this is the problem before anyone gets killed in it. The 3 previous trips to the mechanic were crazy, no one could fix car because it would run fine for 2 or 3 weeks, then shut down going 55 miles on thruway. This is a complete nightmare of a car.

[2 comments, click to read](#)

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