



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

18-MAY-2003 JUL 1

Repository ☐

Reference No.
10020032

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name

Address

City

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS

State IL

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 authorization, NHTSA WILL NOT provide your name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.

Signature of Owner

Date 1/1

VEHICLE INFORMATION

Make

DODGE

Model

GRAND CARAVAN

Model Year

2000

Date Purchased

8/2000

Dealer's Name and Telephone Number

SCHAUMBURG DODGE, 847-885-9150

Engine:

No. Cylinders

6

Fuel Type:

Original Owner

W

Dealer's City

205 W. GOLF RD
SCHAUMBURG

State

IL

Zip Code

60195

Transmission Type

☒ Antilock Brakes

Powertrain

☒ Cruise Control

Vehicle Component Code

030000 SERVICE BRAKES, HYDRAULIC

Multiple Failure: 1

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s)

16-MAY-2003

Failure Mileage

27121

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: DOTM15ABC038)

☐ 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), 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).

THE VEHICLE'S FRONT ROTORS RUSTED AND THE PADS WORE OUT BEFORE 50000 MILES. "NLM

SEE ATTACHED "PROBLEM EXPLANATION"

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

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

The Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-579) 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.

Problem Explanation:

Disk Rotors must have a sufficient amount of mass in order to absorb the heat that's generated, due to friction, when the brakes are applied, and also preserve their structural integrity. Rust pitted Rotors (with rust holes in them) have less mass. This mass deficiency results in overheating of the Rotors and consequently to warping (deformation) of the flat surface and the round shape of the Rotors. This deformation causes vibration, which can result in brake failure and loss of vehicle control. A rust pitted Rotor, if not noticed in time, it might even result in falling apart (fracturing into pieces) due to overheating. The rust cavities in the Rotors can lead to unpredictable results, serious injuries to passengers and even deadly accidents.

This problem (pitted rust) is a manufacturing defect of the Rotor metal material which contains impurities, and it is not caused by weather or usage conditions. To correct this problem you must **REPLACE** the rotors with new non-defective ones.

I have replaced the rust pitted Rotors with new, and the defective ones are available for inspection and testing if you are interested. A repair receipt is also attached.

As I have mentioned in my original letter, I attach another copy of it again, I have contacted the Chrysler Corporation, at their National Customer Service? telephone 1-800-992-1997, twice and reported the problem but they were unreceptive to do anything about it, and they simply were repeating to me the deceptive explanations they had been given by their dealer, at Feeny Dodge.

I hope someone with authority corrects this problem before it is too late and passengers and drivers are injured seriously.

Sincerely,



May 20, 2003

On May 16, 2003 I took my Dodge Grand Caravan 2000 minivan to Feeny Dodge dealer to diagnose a noise in the brakes. After checking it out the diagnosis was that the front wheels rotors were "pitted and rusted", and they needed to be replaced at an estimate of \$370. I asked service advisor Robert Wojcik what could have caused that problem and he said it was due to "low mileage", even though the minivan is driven every day for at least 15 miles. On the other hand when I was discussing the issue with service manager John Kotke, he told me that the problem was due to "normal use". I asked him if it was "normal use" for the rotors of his vehicle (his Dodge car) to be replaced at 27,121 miles. He said that he does not need to change them. When I questioned him why it was "normal use" to replace the rotors in my minivan but not in his vehicle he gave me no explanation. I told them that my minivan has only 27,121 miles-it is less than 36 months old and the repairs should be covered under the 36 month/36,000 miles warranty or even under the extended 7 year/75,000 miles warranty, that I have purchased. I said that the "pitted rust", (rust holes inside the metal material), problem is due to a manufacturing defect and it is not caused by "low mileage" or "normal use". They refused to do the repairs under warranty coverage.

Since their explanations were contradicting I decided to consult with another Dodge dealer, at Schaumburg Dodge. Their diagnosis was again "pitted rust" (the serviceman looked only at one side of one rotor to determine "slight pitting" but nonetheless the rotors needed to be replaced). When I asked service manager Mike I. about the cause of the problem, he said it was due to the "weather in Chicago land" and that the "they don't make them as good as they used to". I asked him why the weather does not affect the rotors of my other car, Toyota 2001, in the same way as it affects the Dodge minivan, but he had no response or explanation.

I have also consulted with the mechanics of Merlin's Muffler and Brakes, an independent operator, and they told me that the problem is due to "cheap materials" used, and that they have seen other Dodge customer having problems similar to mine.

I felt that the Dodge dealer explanations and responses were dishonest and deceptive and I decided to call customer service at Chrysler National, at 1-800-992-1997, and I spoke to "Randy". I explained to her my situation and she said she needed to speak to the dealer that diagnosed the problem, and then she would call me back. Indeed she called back soon and she said that the dealer representative John Kotke told her that the problem was due to "normal use", and thus repair expenses would not be covered by the warranties. I explained to her that this problem could only be caused by a manufacturing defect in the material that contains impurities and deteriorates prematurely. I tried to explain to her that it is impossible for a driver to cause "pitted rust" (in other words, "insert rust holes inside the metal rotors)". Even though she could not explain to me how this problem could be caused by me, the driver, so that it should not be covered by the warranty, she kept on insisting that the dealer told her that it was "normal use". I asked to discuss the issue with her supervisor or a manager but she said she was "making final decisions" and she would not allow me to speak to anyone else.

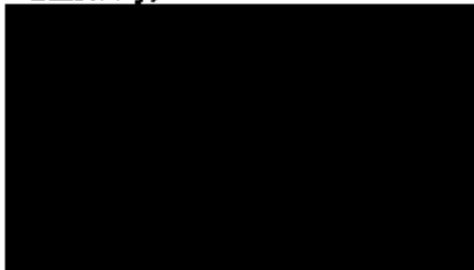
I called again Chrysler National and I spoke to another customer representative, Tom Summers. I explained to him the whole situation again, but he said that, even though he "understood" me, he could not change the decision by "Randy" nor he would allow me to speak to a supervisor.

I also like to mention another encounter with Chrysler, relevant to this situation. In 1997 I had bought a new Dodge Grand Caravan minivan. In 1998 it developed the same problem, "pitted rusted rotors", at 14months/13,000 miles (at least that's when it was detected even though I believe the defect was there from the beginning). At that time Chrysler National realized that it was a manufacturing defect and they covered the repairs under the warranty. The new rotors they installed had shown no signs of "pitted rust" until the 33,000 miles mark (I owned the minivan only until that mileage). My question then (and now) was why the Dodge minivan replacement rotors lasted longer (without "pitted rust") than the original ones. The only explanation is that they are made of two different qualities, (the original rotors are defective – while the replacement ones are non-defective).

After all the above encounters with Chrysler (Dodge) minivans and representatives I believe that this corporation is knowingly using and installing defective and unsafe rotors in their Dodge Grand Caravan minivans. These defects cause premature wear, costly repair expenses and endanger the lives of the consumers, by vibrating and warped-out braking systems. I am convinced that their explanations are dishonest and misleading, and their practices are deliberately deceptive. I hope that these practices can be investigated, exposed and stopped, and the defrauded consumers be compensated for their expenses.

I enclose an invoice from Feeny Dodge, an invoice from Schaumburg Dodge, a repair estimate from Merlin's Muffler and Brakes, and pictures of the defective rotors (which I have removed from my vehicle and replaced them with non-defective ones).

Sincerely,



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).