



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 1367

Date Received
2003 JUN 26 PM 1
27-MAY-2003

Repository ☐
Reference No.
10021619

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name _____
Address _____
City CANADA State 00 Zip Code _____

Daytime Telephone Number _____
Evening Telephone Number _____
E-mail Address _____

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 11 JUNE 2003

VEHICLE INFORMATION

17-Digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of vehicle on driver's side
4T1B017K0TU665328 Make TOYOTA Model CAMRY Model Year 1996

Date Purchased 30 DEC 1995 Dealer's Name and Telephone Number DIXIE TOYOTA ?
Engine: No. Cylinders 6 Fuel Type: GAS

Original Owner ☒ Dealer's City MISSISSAUGA State ONT Zip Code ?

Transmission Type AUTO ☒ Antilock Brakes ☒ Cruise Control ?
Powertrain ?
Vehicle Component Code 021210 SUSPENSION:FRONT:SPRINGS:COIL SPRINGS
Multiple Failure: 1

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s) 09-MAY-2003 Failure Mileage 200000 Failure Speed < 1 mph

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).

THE VEHICLE'S FRONT SUSPENSION COIL SPRING SNAPPED WHILE DRIVING IN REVERSE. *NLM
DRIVER SIDE TO MOVE OUT OF
PARKING PLACE
FRACTURED END OF SPRING SCORED TIRE WALL.
MICROSCOPIC OBSERVATION OF FRACTURED SURFACE
SHOWED DARK CRYSTALS EMBEDDED IN THE STEEL.

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.

[redacted], Acton, Ontario, [redacted]

Home 'phone:- [redacted]

Work 'phone:- [redacted]

e-mail:- [redacted]

16th May 2003

Accompanying this note are the invoice for repair of the damage resulting from the fracture of the front spring on my 1996 Camry and the service record. I discussed this with one of your representatives on Wednesday, May 14 and she advised me to fax both the invoice and a copy of the service record. I perform most routine service myself, which accounts for the informal nature of the records. However, springs are not a maintenance item, so the maintenance records are irrelevant. I have examined the fractured spring with a microscope and observe numerous black, or at least dark, crystals embedded in the metal at the fracture plane. I have also had a colleague with materials science training make a similar examination. We both agree that such crystals should not be present in the spring steel, that their presence can only arise from problems during the manufacture of the steel and that they would undoubtedly cause a serious weakness in the steel which would result in the observed failure. Clearly the car is past normal warranty, but springs are not wear items and are typically one of the last components to breakdown, as witnessed by the rich preservation of such in automobile wrecking yards. It is very clear that the original defect in manufacture of the spring caused its failure, and that such failure has nothing to do with the mileage on the vehicle. It is very fortunate that the breakdown occurred while the vehicle was parked, had it occurred at speed, the consequences would have been very serious indeed and a much larger liability would be resting with Toyota.

The failure of the spring resulted in considerable inconvenience in terms of towing (paid for by my CAA membership), the direct costs of the repairs (\$484.70 + 72.70 tax = \$557.40) and cost of a rental car for a week (approx. \$210 + tax), because the replacement springs were only available from Vancouver and it took time to get them in and the job done. Because another job was performed at the same time, I am willing to be flexible on the recovery of the rental charges.

I might point out that this is my second Camry, and I have advised my daughter to purchase two other Toyotas, which have also proven satisfactory. The reason why I chose Toyota a second time, and recommended them to my daughter, was because of strong, and ongoing, satisfaction with the product. I am willing to consider the defect in spring manufacture to be an aberration which may be difficult to control during manufacture and will continue with my satisfaction with the company and its products if we can resolve this in a timely and satisfactory manner.

~~Send~~

Toyota response by 'phone, [redacted], out of warranty, thus no coverage

[REDACTED]
Acton,
Ontario, [REDACTED]

28th., May, 2003.

Dear Sirs,

On the 16th of May this year, I sent to the attention of your review team, a letter concerning a problem of spring fracture on my 1996 Camry. I explained that the problem arose from the presence of crystals embedded in the steel, an obvious manufacturing defect. One of your representatives 'phoned me on or about May 23rd to tell me that you were unwilling to make any recompense because of the mileage on the vehicle, even though it is quite obvious that the original defect has nothing to do with mileage or age.

Since sending my complaint, I have discovered that identical problems have been experienced by numerous other owners of the same model and year, remarkably all on the same (driver's) side as my own fracture, and mostly under the same circumstances. Their complaints are listed on the NHTSA web site, with the complaints being reported over the period from May 1999 to April 2003. Evidently the NHTSA agreed with my assessment that such a cluster of problems with what is normally an extremely durable component was unusual, a serious safety risk and worthy of analysis. They performed such an analysis in their action # PEO 1024. It seems to me that the list of other identical complaints, plus the NHTSA analysis, together with my own metallurgical observations, add up to a very compelling case for a serious manufacturing defect.

In light of this new evidence, of which you were no doubt aware when you made your decision to refuse to offer me any compensation, you have two options. You may offer me compensation, as originally requested, in which case I shall not take the matter any further, or I shall take the matter to small claims court. As indicated above, I believe that my case will be strong, given the evidence available, and of course I shall be presenting the case myself, at no cost, but it will cost you a considerably more than I am requesting to defend the case. How you wish to proceed is your choice, please inform me of your decision. You may contact me at home [REDACTED], work [REDACTED] or by e-mail [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely,
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

As of 11 June, no response from Toyota Canada

**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).**