



DOT Auto Safety Hotline

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 252

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

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

Date Received  
2003 JUN 10 AM 11  
16-JUN-2003

Repository   
Reference No.  
10024165

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name [Redacted]  
Address [Redacted]  
City GRASS VALLEY State CA Zip Code [Redacted]

Daytime Telephone Number [Redacted] E-mail Address [Redacted]  
Evening Telephone Number [Redacted]

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide information to the manufacturer of your vehicle?  YES  NO  
In the absence of an authorized signature or address to the vehicle manufacturer.  
Signature of Owner [Redacted] Date 10 June 03

VEHICLE INFORMATION

Make DODGE Model RAM Model Year 1997  
Date Purchased 2 Sept 2000 Dealer's Name and Telephone Number [Redacted]  
Original Owner  Dealer's City Auburn State CA Zip Code 95603  
Transmission Type 5 SPGD Manual Antilock Brakes  Cruise Control   
Powertrain Vehicle Component Code 103000 POWER TRAIN: AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION  
Multiple Failure: at least 2

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s) 16-JUN-2003 Failure Mileage 83000 Failure Speed 60 mph 5th gear unit -  
83000 65-70 mph 5th gear unit -

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Make [Redacted] Tire Model (Name or Number) [Redacted] Tire Size (Example P215/65R15) [Redacted]  
DOT No. (Example: DOTM19ABC036) Original Equipment  Prior Repair  Failure Location: [Redacted]  
Tire Component Code [Redacted] Tire Failure Type [Redacted]

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A CHILD SEAT FAILURE

Make: [Redacted] Date Manufactured: [Redacted] Model No./Name: [Redacted]  
Seat Type: [Redacted] Installation System: [Redacted]  
Child Seat Component Code: [Redacted] Failed Part: [Redacted]

APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION

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

Crash  Yes  No Fire  Yes  No  
Number of Persons Injured [Redacted] Number of Deaths [Redacted] 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).

WHILE TRAVELING ON THE HIGHWAY AND WITHOUT PRIOR WARNING, 5TH GEAR TO THE TRANSMISSION WENT OUT. \*AK  
Please see enclosed letter - copies of repair in copies also enclosed

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 Administration 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]  
Grass Valley, CA [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

July 29, 2003

Office of Defects Investigation  
400 7<sup>th</sup> St, SW  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Sirs,

This is my narrative regarding an engineering defect which I am learning is common on Dodge Pickups with 5-speed, manual transmissions manufactured at least in the years 1996 and 1997. I suspect there are other years also, but can't verify my suspicions.

I purchased my vehicle used in 2000 and do not know whether the former owner also experienced this problem. It is powered by a Cummins diesel engine. In July 2002, while pulling a boat from Cleveland, Ohio I experienced a sudden loss of power. We were traveling at approximately 60mph. Fortunately the traffic was very light due to the late hour. We were able to coast off of the pavement. I found only 5<sup>th</sup> gear was involved. I continued home in 4<sup>th</sup> gear. The truck had approximately 83,000 on it. Upon returning home I was informed that this was a common problem and was not a covered repair. There is a nut that holds 5<sup>th</sup> gear in place and for some reason "comes loose". Dodge has come out with a new nut to try and fix this problem and therefore are aware of this defect. Their technical service bulletin also recommends changing out the 5<sup>th</sup> gear. Nobody can explain to me why this is necessary. I finally had the truck repaired at my local Dodge dealer in December of 2002. The mileage was 91,725. During the original repair no mention was made regarding the placing of a new 5<sup>th</sup> gear. Please note: I purchased the new nut at another Dodge dealer because the local dealer did not have one, and the parts man couldn't even find a part number.

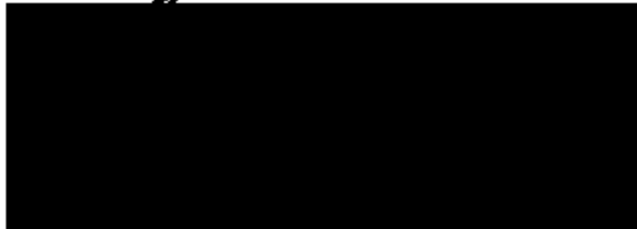
On June 4<sup>th</sup> 2003 While traveling North on Interstate 5 toward Oregon I experienced the second failure of 5<sup>th</sup> gear. At the time I was traveling between 65mph and 70mph. Again, without warning, the truck experienced a total loss of power, due to loss of 5<sup>th</sup> gear. Being a "veteran" of this problem, I shifted into 4<sup>th</sup> gear and continued on my trip. I also called my wife at home, asking her to contact the dealer that I had paid for the "repair". The mileage on the truck was approximately 102,500 at this point. Upon returning home I went to the dealer and was informed there was no warrantee for this. I had numerous appointments during the next couple of weeks, but contacted another Dodge dealer in an adjacent town. I was informed that Dodge had a one-year/12000 mile warrantee on parts that are OEM and installed by an authorized dealer, and that this would more than likely be covered. An appointment was made to bring my truck in for the following week. The mileage on the truck when I arrived at the dealer was 105,750.

At that time another new nut was installed, along with a new 5<sup>th</sup> gear. I was then informed since the truck now had approximately 14,000 on it since the original repair, the cost of the repairs would have to be paid by me.

I have contacted Dodge and have basically been told they have no responsibility. I suspect they feel a sudden loss of power is not a safety issue. Common sense would suggest otherwise. It's simply not reasonable to manufacture a vehicle that has an inherent flaw that could conceivably cause a vehicle to stall in traffic and be involved in a high-speed crash.

I am asking your help in "encouraging" Dodge to rectify this problem. I truly hope it doesn't take a traffic death to cause appropriate action.

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).**