



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

Date Received

Od_or _____
rt_dt _____
od_rt _____
up_tr _____

2003 SEP 12 PM 1:

Reference No.

10040007

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name _____
Street No. _____ Apt. No. _____
City Phoenix, Arizona Zip Code _____

Daytime Telephone Number _____

Do you authorize _____ to report this vehicle? ☐ YES ☐ NO
in the absence of _____ to the vehicle manufacturer.

Signature of Owner _____

Date 8/20/03

PRODUCT INFORMATION

Vehicle Identification No. (VIN) (17 Digits) (Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side)		Make	Model	Year	
☐ New ☐ Used		Dealer's Name Dealer's City State Zip Code	Engine Size (CID/GCC) No. Cylinders ☐ Turbo ☐ Diesel ☐ Gas ☐ Fuel Injection		
Manufacture Date (on driver's door or pillar)	Transmission Type ☐ Manual ☐ Automatic	Restraint System ☐ Driver's Side Air Bag ☐ Passenger's Side Air Bag ☐ 5-Point Belt ☐ Motorist ☐ 3-Point Belt	Cruise Control ☐ Yes ☐ No	Drivetrain ☐ Front ☐ Rear ☐ 4-Wheel	Vehicle Type ☐ Car ☐ Van ☐ Minivan ☐ Sport Utility ☐ Truck ☐ Motorcycle ☐ Other
Body Style ☐ 2-Door ☐ 4-Door ☐ Stationwagon ☐ Pick Up Truck ☐ Other					

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Part Name(s) DOT CHHK GP4 449	Location ☐ Left ☐ Right ☐ Front ☐ Rear	Failed Part(s) ☐ Original ☐ Replacement	Handicap Adaptive Equip ☐ Yes ☐ No
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TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Brand Pirelli	Tire Name Desert Dog/Norseman Qw1	Complete Tire Size LT 235/75 R-15
No. of Failures Four (4)	Date(s) of Failure(s) Mileage at Failure(s) Vehicle Speed at Failure(s)	Failed Part(s) Available? ☒ Yes ☐ No NHTSA Previously Contacted? ☐ Yes ☒ No

APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION

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

Crash ☐ Yes ☒ No	Fire ☐ Yes ☒ No	Number of Persons Injured None	Number of Fatalities None	Reported to Manufacturer ☒ Yes ☐ No	Tire Retailer
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Narrative Description of Incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies).

The failure of four (4) Pirelli light truck tires for complete details, see attached letter of June 17, 2003, directed to Discount Tire Co., Inc., and accompanying documentation and photographs.

Continue on back.

The Privacy Act of 1974 - Public Law 93-579 This information is requested pursuant to 49 U.S.C. Chapter 301. You are under no obligation to respond to this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist NHTSA in determining whether a manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If NHTSA proceeds with administration enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.

Mail postage free or fax to 202-366-7882


Phoenix, Arizona


August 21, 2003

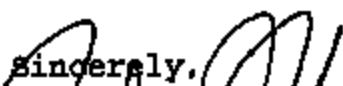
U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Office of Defects Investigation, NSA-10.01
400th 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Gentlemen:

Re: Failure of Pirelli Desert Dog/Norsemen Owl
Light Truck Tires.

Enclosed for your review and consideration you will find a completed Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire detailing my experiences with the failure of four (4) Pirelli Desert Dog/Norsemen Owl light truck tires.

As you will note from the accompanying correspondence the failures nearly had catastrophic results.

Sincerely, 


[REDACTED]
Phoenix, Arizona [REDACTED]

COPY

June 17, 2003

Office of the President
Discount Tire Co., Inc.
20225 North Scottsdale Road
Scottsdale, Arizona 85255

Re: Pirelli, Desert Dog Tires,
aka Norseman Owls

Dear Sir:

On March 11, 2000, I purchased from your outlet at 2240 West Camelback Road, four (4) new LT 235/75R-15 Desert Dog tires for my 1977 Dodge van. The van mileage at that time was approximately 85,664 (See attached photo copy of Sales Receipt).

Upon returning from a trip to Texas during January of this year a large bulge was noticed in the tread of the right front Desert Dog tire. It was taken to your facility at 10058 North Metro Parkway West where it was determined to be defective and replaced with a Fisk Phantom tire of the same size. (Copy of sales receipt attached.) Mileage on the vehicle at that time was approximately 95,000, thus, the tire defect was noted after 9,336 miles.

Recently, on Sunday morning, May 25, 2003, the tread on the right rear Desert Dog tire exploded off the tire carcass while traveling south on Interstate 10 near Casa Grande, Arizona at approximately 70 mph. The result was an extremely harrowing, life threatening experience during which control of the vehicle was nearly lost two or three times. After half a mile or so, speed was able to be reduced to the extent that control could be recovered and the van was guided off the highway and down into a gully where the wheel could be replaced with a spare. It might be noted that the tire without most of its tread, did not deflate. I am not sure whether this was good or bad, since riding down the highway on what was essentially an "inner

COPY

tube" made the vehicle extremely difficult to control. Locating another tire at around 8:30 a.m. on a Sunday morning was not an easy task, but was accomplished (See copy of the Rocha's receipt for the new tire). The mileage on the vehicle at the time was approximately 97,275. Thus, this second tire had traveled approximately 11,611 miles before it failed.

Subsequently, on Saturday, May 31, 2003, the left rear Desert Dog tire threw its tread and failed on Interstate 10 approximately 42 miles east of Van Horn, Texas. Fortunately, at that time the vehicle was only traveling at about sixty (60) miles per hour and the tire deflated completely, which seemed to make it easier to control, until it was brought to a stop on the side of the highway. This failure occurred after approximately 13,113 miles. Again, the tire was replaced with a spare and I proceeded on to Van Horn, Texas. Upon stopping at a Texaco facility to purchase a new tire, it was observed that the left front Desert Dog tire had developed cracks in the casing between the treads and this tread was also in the process of separation. Fortunately, this embryonic problem was caught before an additional highway failure occurred. At this point this fourth tire had traveled approximately 13,155 miles before signs of failure appeared. As a consequence two (2) new tires were then purchased. (Copy of Lomax Texaco Sales Receipt attached.)

In addition to the exposure to significant personal injury and resultant vehicle damage, and the cost and expense of new tires, the underside fender areas of the van were damaged by tread flying off the tires.

In summary, these Desert Dog tires (apparently also known as Pirelli Norseman Owls) suffered a one hundred (100%) failure rate after a relatively few miles.

Have these Pirelli tire failures been reported to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, the Consumer Product Safety Council or other governmental agencies? If so, was a recall or other action taken?

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What is the Policy of Discount Tire Co., Inc., when presented with such failed products?

I will await your response.

Sincerely,



**RIGHT
REAR TIRE
(Desert Dog)**

**SUNDAY, MAY 25, 2003
Approximately 8:15 a.m.**

**TREAD SEPARATION AFTER
APPROXIMATELY 11,611 MILES.**

CASA GRANDE, ARIZONA

VEHICLE MILEAGE: 98819

**LEFT
REAR TIRE
(Desert Dog)**

**SATURDAY, May 31, 2003
Approximately 4:00 P.M.**

**TREAD SEPARATION AFTER
APPROXIMATELY 13,113 MILES**

**APPROXIMATELY 42 MILES EAST
of Van Horn, Texas.**

VEHICLE MILEAGE: 98774

**LEFT
FRONT TIRE
(Desert Dog)**

**REMOVED SATURDAY, MAY 31,
2003, Approximately 5:45 P.M.
at Van Horn, Texas after signs of
TREAD SEPARATION began to
appear.**

Approx. 13,155 Miles on Tire.

VEHICLE MILEAGE: 98819

SUV rollover kills 3, injures 3

8-8-03
Gilbert family, friends returning from getaway

By Lindsay Collopy and
Brent Whiting
The Arizona Republic

Caryl Lapota pointed to a 3-foot wall across the street from her Gilbert home, recalling a scene that could be played out now only in her memory.

"The kids used to perform for the neighborhood on that wall, have plays," Lapota said

of Lindsay Whelchel, 10, and her sister Bridgette Whelchel, 14. "We always kept an eye on the girls."

There won't be any more plays, nor will neighbors attend another barbecue where Brent Whelchel, 36, and his band entertain the crowd. Brent and daughter Lindsay lost their lives after their vehicle rolled over on Interstate 10 west of

the Valley. Friend Tawnee Hogan, 14, also died.

Three others suffered non-life threatening injuries, including Brent's wife, Karla Whelchel, 36, who was driving the SUV.

The crash occurred about 5 p.m. Wednesday when a tire blew out and the driver lost control, causing the 1998 Ford Expedition to roll several times

in the median, said Officer Steve Volden, a spokesman for the Arizona Department of Public Safety.

All but one passenger was wearing a seat belt; that person was ejected, Volden said. The crash occurred 26 miles west of Tempe.

The four-member Gilbert family and two friends were returning from a getaway when the accident occurred.

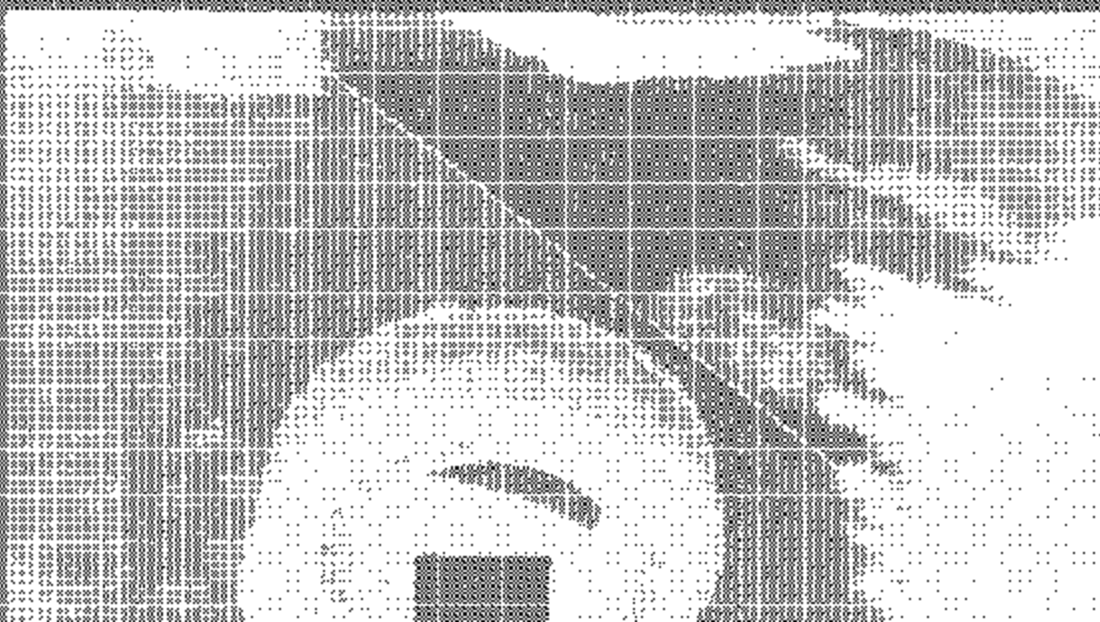
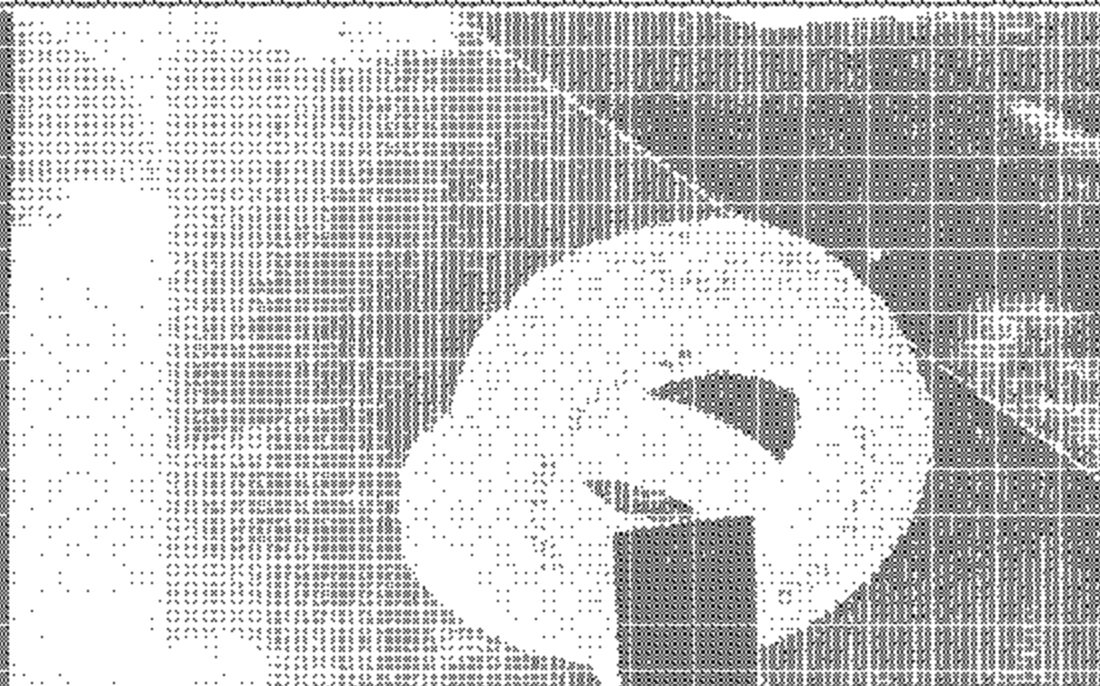
Karla, daughter Bridgette and friend Gabriella Montoya,

12, sustained non-life-threatening injuries and were taken to a Phoenix hospital.

"They were good people trying to raise good kids," said neighbor David Faust, 42. "It's totally shocking."

Lapota described Brent as someone who "had a zest for life."

"I'm just devastated, it's very frightening," Lapota said. "My husband has called me three times today (saying), 'I don't want to drive.'"



**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).**