



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 100146

Date Received: 2003 NOV 12 PM 6:20  
Repository:   
Reference No.: 10043981

**OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)**

Name: [Redacted]  
Address: [Redacted]  
City: MERCED State: CA Zip Code: [Redacted]  
Daytime Telephone Number: [Redacted] E-mail Address: [Redacted]  
Evening Telephone Number: [Redacted]

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: [Redacted] Date: 10/30/03

**VEHICLE INFORMATION**

17 digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of dashboard on driver's side: JA3AJ26E22U009731  
Make: MITSUBISHI Model: LANCER Model Year: 2002  
Date Purchased: June 2002 Dealer's Name and Telephone Number: McAuley Motors 209-722-2777  
Engine: No. of Cylinders: [Redacted] Fuel Type: [Redacted]  
Original Owner: [Redacted] Dealer's City: Merced State: CA Zip Code: 95340  
Transmission Type:  Automatic  Manual  
 Antilock Brakes  Cruise Control Powertrain: [Redacted]  
Vehicle Component Code: 036000 SERVICE BRAKES, HYDRAULIC/ANTILOCK  
Multiple Failure: 1

**FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION**

Incident Date(s): 01-DEC-2002 Failure Mileage: 7142 Failure Speed: [Redacted]

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE**

Tire Make: [Redacted] Tire Model (Name or Number): [Redacted] Tire Size (Example P216/65R15): [Redacted]  
DOT No. (Example: DOTM1ALBABC036): [Redacted]  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).

BRAKES WORE OUT PREMATURELY. PART HAS BEEN REPLACED THREE TIMES; BUT PROBLEM STILL EXISTS. \*AK

I believe there is something wrong with the calipers or brake design causing the brakes to prematurely wear out therefore I do not feel safe not knowing what the actual problem is. I have contacted the dealer and Mitsubishi. I have sent over

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

Narrative Description of Incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies)

Several correspondences to Mitsubishi customer relations and have not received any response.

Please see enclosed documents

Thank you for your assistance with any investigation that you can do.

My daughter drove my Toyota for a mas and did not wear out the brakes or tires.

Sincerely,

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

U.S. Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

400 Seventh St., S.W. Washington, D.C. 20590

Official Business Penalty for Private Use \$300



NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES

**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO 79173 WASHINGTON, D.C.

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY NATL. HWY. TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMIN.

U.S. Department of Transportation  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
Office of Defects Investigation, NVS-216  
400 7th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20590



**VEHICLE  
OWNER'S  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

**DOT AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE**

TO REPORT VEHICLE SAFETY DEFECTS  
COMPLETE THIS FORM  
OR

**DASH2DOT**

and dial toll free at


**1-888-DASH-2-DOT**

**1-888-327-4236**

DOT Auto Safety Hotline  
(DASH) 2 DOT



U.S. Department of Transportation  
National Highway Traffic Safety  
Administration  
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/dot>



October 16, 2003

MMSA Mitsubishi Motors  
R & D America  
6420 Katella Ave.  
Cypress, CA 90630-5208

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to express my disappointment and problems with the 2002 Lancer that I purchased in June 2002 from McAuley Motors in Merced, CA. My letter is going to be quite lengthy and I sincerely hope that Mr. Tom McMorrان was mistaken when he told me contacting you would be a total waste of my time because he has the final word. He refused to give me a phone number or email address to further reach him or the Regional Manager, Mr. Gregg Carroll because he gets too many wacky customers calling him on weekends. I spoke with Mr. McMorrان on Oct. 14. He stated he would be meeting with Mr. Carroll and Mr. Mahoney the next day and that he would get back to me which he did not.

On September 9, 2002 I took the car in due to black oily spots on my garage floor in the location of all four tires. I was told it was from excess factory over coating. They rotated the tires and I asked if there was anything further we should check for at that time for a mileage check up. I was told no, as long as I was getting my oil changes done, which I do faithfully every 3000 miles at Jiffy Lube.

October 9, 2002 I took the car in because the brakes were squeaking. I was told that it would be \$37.50 to check. I disputed that because the brakes were still under warranty but they insisted they would have to charge me so I agreed and signed the estimate. I was told the brakes were fine and when I presented my check I was told it would be no charge. The brakes were still squeaking so on Saturday Oct. 12 I took the car to Midas and simply stated the Mitsubishi service center was closed and could they please check my brakes because they were making a squeaking noise. I said the car is brand new so it is possible the brakes just need adjusted or deglazed. They agreed and an hour later called me and said they couldn't believe it but the car needed new brakes, more so on the front. I asked them to please print out the measurements for me and that I didn't have the money until Monday. I didn't want them to feel like they would be getting in the middle of my dispute with McAuley's service center. Monday morning Oct. 14 I was at the service center at 7:30 with my measurements from Midas and quite naturally very frustrated. Susan, the service ctr mgr, insisted she would check out the brakes and would have to get permission to replace them under warranty. I went to work and was called and told they would replace the front brakes only. When I went to pick up my car I asked why I was told on Wednesday that my brakes were fine and she told me they didn't check them because her and another tech didn't hear the noise and she wanted to save me the \$37.50. I was furious and stated that I had signed the estimate and had assumed my brakes

had been checked when they told me they had checked out fine. I asked for the rear to be replaced and they disputed the measurements from Midas and refused. I asked for the old front brake pads and she said they had to be sent to Mitsubishi because they are a penny-pinching company and need to see them for proof. I questioned the fact why would I even need new brake pads at only 7000 miles and I was told it had to be my teenage daughters driving habits, which I certainly didn't believe. I stated that I would be back for my brakes to be checked, especially the rear before the expiration of the 12,000 mile brake pad warranty.

January 9, 2003 I took the car back in because the rear brakes were squeaking, especially in reverse. The mileage was 11,300. I also requested the front brakes be checked. I was told the front were good and the rear measured at 5, I was not given a measurement for the front. They rotated the tires, again I asked if we should do anything further for a mileage check up and was told the same thing regarding oil changes. I asked if we should balance or align the tires and I was told no. I stated that I thought that was unusual because on my Toyota I always balance every 10,000 miles.

March 14, 2003 I took the car to a local mechanic used by several of the employees that I work with because the brake noise was still quite consistent. Mileage 14725, I was told the two rear tires needed replaced and before too long the front ones would need replaced, probably in approx 5000 more miles. He asked if I had ever balanced or aligned the tires and I said no, Mitsubishi had not done that. He deglazed the front brake pads and rotors and advised me he would reinspect the brakes at my first tire rotation unless I continued to hear the noise and if so bring the car back in.

March 28, 2003 I took the car back to the local mechanic for the brake noise, mileage 15250. He inspected and advised me the front brake pads needed replaced, he just couldn't believe a car with this low mileage would need brake pads for a second time. His first assumption was teenage driving so he told my daughter to take him for a drive, she had no idea what he was watching, and when we returned to the station he said she drove fine, he was watching to see if her left or right foot rode the brake. That was not the case. She drove my Toyota for nine months, Sept. 2001 to June 2002 and the brake pads have not needed replaced, in fact, I had it in for the 90,000 mile checkup in March 2002 and the brakes were fine. The Toyota was basically hers for the first nine months that she had her license. She took me to work, my roommate's daughter to school, herself to school, picked us all up and was free to use the car at any time. She put on approx 7000 miles also in that nine-month period. Mr. Moran even tried to suggest that Toyota's have a more common brake problem than Mitsubishi's and that he came from Toyota. I told him that was not so in my situation, that my Toyota Corolla has 110,000 miles on it and I have not had to replace brake pads more than two times, three at the most. The mechanic suggested that he believed there was something wrong in the design of the brakes on the Lancer causing them to prematurely wear causing the sensor to activate.

April 3, 2003 I contacted Mr. Barry McAuley and advised him of the whole situation and my frustration. He stated he would have Mr. Mahoney, the factory rep contact me. Mr. Mahoney did not contact me until the 14th. I was requesting to be refunded for the brakes and the tires. He insisted the brakes and tires were wearing because of driver abuse and made accusations that my daughter must be racing around corners and slamming on the brakes. My daughter graduated from a Christian High School with a 3.8 GPA and I really don't appreciate that he wants to classify her as a wild teenage driver. Again, my Toyota did not need the brakes or tires replaced after she drove it for nine months. He also stated that according to his technical people there are no brake sensors in Mitsubishi automobiles. I believe he should refer to page 6-31 in the manual that clearly states there is a brake alarm that alerts you to replace your brakes. I believe an alarm could also be referred to as a sensor. He insisted there had not been any other reports of this problem. I truly am not concerned if any other owner has not experienced these problems, it doesn't make the fact that I am any less. We ended our email conversations stating we would see how long the second set of

brake pads would last.

April 25, 2003 I took the car to my local mechanic for a wheel alignment mileage 16787.

July 8, 2003 I took the car to my local mechanic, mileage 19447 to check noise in right front tire. He could not duplicate the sound.

Sept 5, 2003 I took the car to my local mechanic for the other two new tires. He couldn't believe it but the front brake pads were worn again. They did not charge me for the brake pads even though it is not their problem. I have even been driving the car quite a bit out of town for the past 7000 miles instead of just the usual in town miles as the previous 15,000 miles had been. He even called down to McAuley service center to discuss the situation and was told no other problems have been reported. He told me to give him some time and he was determined to find out more information on the brake system of the car. I was waiting to hear back from him before I called Susan again to notify her that I had to replace the brakes again. I wanted as much information as I could possibly get. Well then I run into yet another problem.

October 11, 2003 I went to visit friends out of town and I ended up with a nail in the sidewall of my rear tire during the trip. I took the car to Big O to be replaced after a gas station attendant informed me it couldn't be repaired. Big O informed me that my front and rear struts needed replaced because they are leaking and that was quite rare on a car with such low mileage. I told them I would take it back to the dealer on Monday because the car was still under warranty. I asked them to be sure to put their recommendation in writing for me. I just couldn't believe that something else on this car had prematurely worn out.

Monday Oct. 13 I take the car to McAuley Motors and informed Susan of the situation. She called me at 2:00 to inform me the struts are fine and advised me to come and look for myself. The struts looked shiny clean and she insisted it must have been the excess factory over coating, quite like I had experienced on the garage floor, that misled the Big O mechanic to think it was the struts leaking and she insinuated that many tire companies try to oversell. I stated that I did not believe that was the case because they know the car was under warranty. Since I already do not trust Susan and don't understand why she gave me such a hard time to replace my brakes under warranty I spent the whole evening wondering if she had her mechanic clean the struts or worse, did she have him replace them and not want to tell me because it would add to my case of problems with the car.

Tuesday Oct. 14, 2003 I called Big O and spoke with the General Manager and asked him to please speak with his mechanic to find out what lead him to the conclusion of my struts leaking. He called me back and said his mechanic insists the front struts were covered in grease and fully blown. Because of that and the low mileage he believed the front and rear should be replaced. I called Mr. McAuley, I believe I spoke with Mark this time instead of his brother Barry. He said the Mitsubishi factory rep, Mr. McMorran, would be in town that day and he would have him call me. He did call me at 2:30 said he was not in town but asked me the problem. I have never received such poor customer service from a company representative as I did from him. He also wants to believe my daughter must be driving the car terribly hard and does not wish to discuss the brakes because Mr. Mahoney and Susan had already made a decision on the brakes. As far as the struts go I am to get a third opinion and then bring my mechanic to their shop to explain his observation of the struts and the brake system. I am scheduled to have my mechanic put the car up for me this week and my eyes will be the third opinion now that I know what I am looking for. As far as the brakes go, I was advised that my mechanic should not have to leave his job to go to their shop. If I see that the struts are leaking I will miss work to stand and watch the mechanic replace them and include the situation in my complaint to the Dept. of Consumer Affairs If they are not I will take up that issue with Big O and if their mechanic is willing to sign a sworn affidavit then I will stick to

my accusations that Susan replaced the struts and did not want to inform me. As far as the brakes go, I am filing this letter with the complaint form to the Dept. of Consumer Affairs and proceed with an attorney.

Thursday Oct. 16 I called Mr. Mark McAuley to tell him that I do not wish to deal with Mr. McMorran or any other Mitsubishi rep because I purchased the car from him and I would like him to be the go between. He told me he would not do that and stated that I contact you.

I have also reported the brakes to the National Safety Hotline. Something is obviously very wrong for the brake pads to be wearing out approximately every 7000 miles. Please forward a copy of this letter to Mr. McMorran since he refused to give me an email address, street address or phone #.

Sincerely,



Tuesday October 21, 2003

I took the car into the local repair shop that has replaced the brake pads twice for me for them to put the car up on the rafters and inspect the struts. The mechanic and I both looked and the struts do not appear to be leaking. Although, the mechanic did see a lot of the black gummy stuff that McAuley service center insists is excess under coating. I told him that I was being told by the service center that Mitsubishi has been advised to cut back on their under coating. He said he has worked on a lot of Mitsubishi's and has never seen such stuff. The mechanic that normally services my car at this particular shop is out on a medical leave for a three or four more weeks. The supervisor is going to speak to him as soon as possible to ask if he has ever noticed this black gummy stuff all underneath my car, especially near the front tires. Meanwhile, I would like some type of documentation from Mitsubishi that refers to this excess under-coating being an issue. I have also been in touch with Big O tires and I am waiting to hear from the General Manager. If the mechanic there will sign a sworn statement that he is indeed 100% sure the struts were leaking then I am going to proceed with the possible assumption that McAuley Motors Service center replaced my struts and do not wish to tell me because of the brake situation. I will also proceed with sending my complaint to the Dept of Consumer Affairs as well as California Bureau of Automotive Repairs. The attorney that I have spoken with has advised me to contact him after I get some kind of response from Mitsubishi Customer Relations Dept. I told him that I doubt I am going to hear anything since four days have past since I faxed my letter to a Mr. Gregg Kiernan. In my report to Consumer Affairs I am requesting my 36,000 mile warranty to be extended to 60,000 and the brake pad warranty to be extended also to 60,000 or if Mr. McAuley feels this car has no problems he can purchase it back from me at high blue book value.

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).**