



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
(1-888-327-4238)
INTERNET: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 335

Date Received

Repository ☐

2004 JAN 23 PM 2:22
02-JAN-2004

Reference No.
10062273

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name

Address

City

WEST GLOVER

State

VT

Zip Code

Daytime 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 and address to the vehicle manufacturer.

Signature of Owner

VEHICLE INFORMATION

17 digit Vehicle Identification Number located at bottom of dashboard on driver's side

1GBAW1ZF132

Make

SATURN

Model

ION

Model Year

2003

Date Purchased

06-JUN-03

Dealer's Name and Telephone Number

SATURN OF SOUTH BURLINGTON

Engine:

No. Cylinders

4

Fuel Type:

GAS

Original Owner

☒

Dealer's City

SOUTH BURLINGTON

State

VT

Zip Code

05403

Transmission Type

MANUAL

AUTOMATIC

☐ Anti-lock Brakes

☒ Cruise Control

Powertrain

FRONT WHEEL DRIVE

Vehicle Component Code

103000 POWER TRAIN: AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION

Multiple Failure: 2

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s)

12/1-25/04

Failure Mileage

4100-6500

Failure Speed

0-40

12/26/04

6500

0

CAR WOULDNT MAINTAIN SPEED OR CONTROL IN SNOWY COND.
WOULDNT MAKE IT 50' IN DRIVEWAY.

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: DOTM15ABC036)

☐ 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(es).)

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(es).

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).

WHEN TIRES SPIN TRANSMISSION DISCONNECTS. THEN. VEHICLE HAS TO BE TOWED. THIS NORMALLY HAPPENS WHEN IT IS SNOWING. ALSO, STEERING WHEEL TURNS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT ON ITS OWN. *AK

SEE ATTACHED LETTER TO SATURN DATE 12/29/03

Include, if available: Police/Tire 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 responses 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 responses, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.

[REDACTED]
West Glover, VT [REDACTED]

December 29, 2003

Amy Rector
Saturn Customer Assistance Center
100 Saturn Parkway
Mail Code 371-999-S24
Spring Hill, TN 37174-1500

Dear Amy,

This letter is written notice that I am challenging your statement to assure satisfaction with our new Saturn. The problems we are experiencing are as follows:

1. From a stop - when the tires spin the drive train and engine are disconnected from the operator.
2. Traveling in snow - when the tires spin the drive train is disconnected from the operator and the car speed is held below 25 mph.
3. On dry pavement - the steering wheel wanders constantly slightly right to left and requires constant correcting.

Further details:

1. From a stop: First incident occurred during a heavy snow storm in early December 2003. The vehicle disengaged while trying to make it up our drive. When our driveway got plowed the driver helped my wife get up the drive. It took a half hour with the man saying "the wheels aren't turning, are you sure you are in gear?" (The typical 'must be a dumb female' response.) Eventually they managed to get it out with everyone getting frustrated with the car.

That day I called Saturn of South Burlington and was told by a woman at the service desk, who talked with a mechanic, who said if the vehicle has ABS then it also has Track-control. Just push the button on the dash and turn it off. The car is supposed to do that - and I should plan on coming in to a 'car night' and ask how my car works. We could find no button.

Next was a period of 'wait until the plow comes and be late for work' to get out. My wife was left to her own devices as she/we tried to understand what was happening.

Finally came the day I needed the Saturn because my truck wouldn't start - December 26, 2003. The vehicle did start but with four inches of snow in the drive it went about fifty feet and wouldn't go any more. I backed down twenty feet and with a broken track ahead of me tried to start up the drive again - only the car would not move forward or backward. The engine RPMs would not go above 2000. I experienced what my wife had been going through - the car had been disconnected from the driver.

After getting to work (not in the Saturn), I called Saturn of South Burlington and spoke several times with Randy, who also told me about the Track-control button. We determined I did not have ABS and no button could be found. Since the vehicle would not move Randy suggested I call Saturn Roadside Assistance and have it brought in so they could inspect it.

We arrived at the dealership the next day and were told by a mechanic that the vehicle checked out OK and the computer indicated no problem with it. He also stated that in spite of having no ABS or Track-control button all of these transmissions have a Track-control in them. He said they were designed to disengage when the wheels spin to protect the transmission. He also stated the bands could be reset by moving forward in first gear. We brought this to his attention that if the vehicle won't move there is no way to reset the bands! We also stated if one can't spin tires in snow country where in snow country can one go!

2. Traveling in the snow: This is an odd one to explain. While driving in snowy conditions the driving experience is one of a floating feeling while acceleration is compromised. In other words it leaves one floating on the momentum of forward progress. From what we have learned about the power bands we understand this is probably due to the same problem as above. When the vehicle loses traction the tires stop turning. This situation raises a concern regarding the safety of the vehicle towards occupants of this vehicle and others on the highways. We consider this the most serious problem!

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3. On dry pavement: Lance, our salesman from Saturn of South Burlington, called a few days after we purchased the vehicle to ask how things were. We told him about an annoying feature involving the steering. While traveling down the road, the car subtly shifts direction from side to side and requires constant steering correction every one second, approximately. Our heads constantly bob from side to side and can be tiring. During the first oil change this problem was checked. We were told that Saturn manufactured the steering wheel smaller than normal and thus had to create an extra sensitive power steering system and that was the

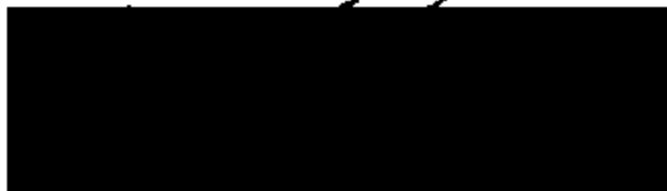
reason for the constant movement. Once again an over design beyond the limits of practicality?

I understand this is a new transmission but the engineering concept may be flawed for performing in snow country. We feel this new vehicle has engineering defects that Saturn has turned out for consumers to test. Saturn needs to take a look at this product.

We have invested in many Saturn's. Saturn needs to provide us with dependable transportation. This vehicle has no value to us as is.

I look forward to hearing your solution.

Respectfully,



Faxed: 12-29-2003

**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).**