



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 335

Date Received

2004 JAN 30  
30-JAN-2004

Repository

Reference No. 506  
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OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name

Address

City

HIALEAH

State FL

Zip Code

Daytime Telephone Number

E-mail Address

Evening Telephone Number

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of this report to the manufacturer of your vehicle?  
In the absence of an authorization, NHTSA WILL NOT provide your name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.  
Signature of Owner *[Signature]* YES  NO   
Date 3/12/04

VEHICLE INFORMATION

17 digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side

1B7FL26X00

Make

DODGE

Model

DAKOTA

Model Year

1998

Date Purchased

05-JUN-99

Dealer's Name and Telephone Number

*Patinkin Dodge*

Engine:

No. Cylinders

V6 3.9L

Fuel Type:

Gasoline

Original Owner

Dealer's City

*Hialeah*

State

FL

Zip Code

Transmission Type

*Automatic*

Antilock Brakes

Cruise Control

Powertrain

Vehicle Component Code

021540 SUSPENSION:FRONT:CONTROL ARM:LOWER BALL JOINT

Multiple Failure: 1

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s)

Failure Mileage

16000

Failure Speed

*upper/lower ball joints driver/passenger side*

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).

WHEN MAKING SHARP TURN A POPPING NOISE WAS COMING FROM THE STEERING WHEEL. TOOK VEHICLE TO MECHANIC, AND HE DETERMINED THAT BALL JOINTS NEEDED TO BE REPLACED. \*AK

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

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

The Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-502) 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]  
Hialeah, FL  
[REDACTED]

May 20, 2004

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

Dear NHTSA,

Included in this envelope are documents and pictures of a complaint made regarding Failed ball-joint components on a 1999 Dodge Dakota. Two separate complaints of the same defect are available for review. Other reports were made, but documentation for these are not available. (Other reports of this same complaint are available in the vehicles service record)

The two Dodge Dealerships, Potamkin Dodge in Hialeah, and Maroone Dodge located in Broward County, received these complaints but took no action. The complaint dealt with violent snapping of the vehicle's front end during sharp cornering/turns, and traveling over bumpy roads. The reports were made when the vehicle had relatively low miles, and even today, the vehicle maintains a low mileage of 33,000. The vehicle was purchased in June of 1999, and has not been subjected to off-road abuse or neglect.

Visual inspection of the ball joint components (included pictures) would indicate they are in danger of coming apart, possibly causing an accident. A defect recorded under manufacturers warranty several times for which nothing was done. Potamkin Dodge quoted replacement of these suspension components at \$250.00 per upper ball-joint, per side. No quote is available on the lower ball-joints, which need replacing as well.

The vehicle is now out of warranty (time-wise), and Dodge requires expensive up-front pricing to even inspect it. I am aware of a similar defect investigation concerning the Dodge Durango, which up until recently shared almost identical front suspension components. I urge you to investigate this matter further for the safety of many who own these vehicles, and are receiving the same treatment from Daimler-Chrysler's Dealerships.

Regards,  
[REDACTED]

**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).**