



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 1367

Date Received

2004 JUN 23
18-APR-2004

Repository ☐

Reference No.
10067385

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name

Address

City

EUGENE

State

OR

Zip Code

Business 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 a signature, your name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.

☒ YES

☒ NO

Signature of Owner

Date 4/30/04

VEHICLE INFORMATION

17 digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side
WWWMA630XE328045

Make

VOLKSWAGEN

Model

PASSAT

Model Year

1999

Date Purchased

Dealer's Name and Telephone Number

Engine:

No. Cylinders

Fuel Type:

Original Owner

Dealer's City

State

Zip Code

Transmission Type

☐ Antilock Brakes

Powertrain

☐ Cruise Control

Vehicle Component Code

061110 ENGINE AND ENGINE COOLING:ENGINE:GASOLINE:BELTS A/

Multiple Failure: 2

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s)

27-APR-2003

Failure Mileage

52315

Failure Speed

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(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).

TIMING BELT LOOSE, FLAPPED UP, AND SEVERED. WHEN THIS OCCURRED VEHICLE LOST POWER AND STALLED. ENGINE COULD NOT RUN,
AND VEHICLE DID NOT ACCELERATE. THIS WAS A COMMON PROBLEM WITH THESE VEHICLES, PER DEALERSHIP. *AK

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

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

The Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-579) 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.

H
W

Eugene Oregon

To:-----

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Center for Auto Safety

Good Day:

This letter is to inform you of the problems incurred with my vehicle, and the potential for peril.

When the timing belt tensioner failed while I was driving, that is to say, when the timing belt broke after the tensioner shredded it, my car came to an abrupt stop. It was if I had shifted into park while in motion. Luckily, I was nearly at my driveway. The power brakes failed and the power steering failed. Imagine if I were on a steep hill, there are many such hills in this town. Forward momentum ceases almost instantly, gravity will take over and any traffic behind will be affected. Now project this scenario onto; no shoulder, downhill, curves, free-way, rush-hour situations and it is easy to see what will eventually happen.

This, I am discovering, is not an individual isolated case, and more than one person seeking reimbursement. When I purchased this vehicle with 52,515 miles, the failure had already occurred. This was remedied by an independent shop, not Volkswagen. Less than 4,000 miles later, it failed again. Supporting documents are enclosed. Also, The enclosed Maintenance Schedule indicates that the timing belt tensioner is not inspected until 105,000 miles, yet the initial failure occurred in half that. There is no way to avoid this problem, as Volkswagen warned me one of the part's propensity for failure. Therefore any shop encountering the failed part will not know that the up-dated replacement part is required to remedy the problem. In addition, owners fortunate enough to avoid the cost a new cylinder head by getting to the problem before the timing belt brakes, will not know that the problem is widespread and will simply have the replacement installed, pay the cost, sparing Volkswagen of America the expense of a costly re-call. Why this is the best of all worlds for Volkswagen of America! But what of the enormous risks? I suppose it matters not, to them...

I've investigated this tensioner through various methods. I have talked to mechanics, approached owners when and where-ever I encounter them, warning them of what is to come. I have also attracted owners via the internet, referring them to each of your fine organizations, as well as offered to file the complaint and do any follow-up. This is slowly yielding fruit slowly, but surely. I have uncovered three (3) owner suffering from the same problem. One of whom, because the warranty was still in effect was reimbursed by Volkswagen. I am securing vehicle identification numbers, names and addresses for these. Two Mechanics that are aware of the problem. Their names and address may be found on page three.

Enclosed please find: Two repair invoices, two letters to Volks wagen of America, one response from Volkswagen of America, one 1999 Maintenance Schedule.

Thanking you in advance...

Mechanics list

Ron Tester's Auto repair, Hwy 99& Roosevelt Blvd. Eugene Oregon 97402.

Ron repaired a vehicle with tensioner failure and Volkswagen paid. He is awaiting the owners return from vacation to get a release of information. His phone number is (541) 521-3409

Guenter Schoener

German Auto Service, Inc. 2045 Franklin Blvd. Eugene Oregon 97403.

Guenter has repaired many timing belt related Volkswagen vehicles (541) 341-4532

McKenna Volkswagen (562) 868-3233

Repaired another Passat with same problem @ 58,000 miles. Volkswagen did not reimburse.

As I find more I will send the to you, meanwhile I will get more information about those i've already contacted. This is a big widespread problem.

15897 99

Type

KM Miles	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120	130	140	150	160	170	180	190	200
Engine Oil - change	x																				
Engine Filter - change	x																				
Water Pmp. - check	x																				
Timing Belt - check condition	x																				
Fuel Filter - replace																					
Timing Belt - replace*																					
Timing Belt Waterpump - replace**																					
Engine Oil - change	x																				
Engine Filter - change	x																				
V-Belt - replace																					
Spark Plugs - replace																					
Timing Belt - check condition																					
Timing Belt - replace																					
Timing Belt Waterpump - replace																					
Engine Oil - change	x																				
Engine Filter - change	x																				
Spark Plugs - replace (all last three months)																					
Spark Plugs - replace (NGK)																					
Timing Belt - check condition																					
Engine Oil - change	x																				
Engine Filter - change	x																				
Spark Plugs - replace																					
Engine Oil - change	x																				
Engine Filter - change	x																				
Spark Plugs - replace																					
Timing Belt - check condition																					
Timing Belt - replace																					
Timing Belt Waterpump - replace																					
WVW Fluid - check level																					
Auto-Shift Lock - check																					
Braze System - check																					
Wheels - rotate front to rear																					
Battery - check electrolyte level																					
Cool Potent Filter - replace																					
Manual Trans. - check for leaks																					
Automatic Trans. - check for leaks																					
Drive Shafts - check condition																					
Drive Shafts - check boots																					
CBD - check DVD memory																					
Rear Check Straps - Adjust																					
Driving Road Test																					
After Road Test																					
Air Cleaner* - replace filter																					
Cooling System - check level																					
V-Belt - check tension/condition																					
Pinch Ball - check condition																					
Front Axle - check																					
Check ATF and oil, level																					
Headlights - adjust																					

Every 60 days after 4 years; except front end loader, every 2 years
 Main Field - Change every 2 years or when oil changes
 Air Bag System - Check for function and change after 4 years, 8 years and every 2 years thereafter

RATTLE

Mr. Klauss:

My name is [REDACTED] I am seeking reimbursement for damage caused by and associated costs incurred when the timing belt tensioner failed in my 1999 Volkswagen Passat. The part's propensity for failure is recognized by Volkswagen service technicians from coast to coast. I certainly recognize this fact, as it failed twice in a 4,000 mile period since I've owned this vehicle. Who knows how many failures occurred with the previous owner? The fact that Volkswagen re-designed the part, and now offers an updated version speaks volumes.

I called the customer care line concerning this matter, and was told a recall must occur for reimbursement. Enough owners must complain to warrant a recall. Sir enclosed is the evidence against this part, please, don't make me wait for a recall for reimbursement. I cannot afford the cost of this failed part.

Also enclosed is the towing, car rental and lost wages proof.

Thank You for your attention, time and swift resolution of this matter.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
EUGENE OREGON [REDACTED]

(H)

(W)

MR. KLAUSS:

ALTHOUGH I HAVE YET TO RECEIVE A LETTER FROM YOU IN RESPONSE TO MINE, I HAVE INQUIRED ABOUT YOUR RESPONSE VIA "THE CUSTOMER CARE LINE". WHAT I NOW WRITE MAY BE CONSIDERED MY RETORT.

THIS MATTER CANNOT BE RESOLVED ANY MEANS SAVE REIMBURSEMENT. ATTEMPTS BY YOUR ORGANIZATION TO TALK ME OUT OF WHAT I KNOW ABOUT YOUR PRODUCT, SUPPRESS INFORMATION CONCERNING MY VEHICLE OR ANY OTHER THAT HAVE PERFORMED SIMILARLY, EVEN GAS ORDERS ON YOUR TECHNICIANS (DAN LEWIS) ONLY ENCOURAGE ME TO INVESTIGATE FURTHER. I HAVE DISCOVERED CREATIVE METHODS TO CONTACT OTHER VICTIMS OF YOUR PRODUCTS.

THE PREMISE IS: PRE-MATURE TENSIONER FAILURE. IT MATTERS NOT THAT A VEHICLE IS IN OR OUT OF WARRANTY, AS THIS IS A SAFETY ISSUE. IF YOU DO NOT ISSUE A BULLETIN, NO INDEPENDENT SHOP KNOWS THAT THE TENSIONER SHOULD BE REPLACED. THE CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION WILL BE NOTIFIED AND PRESSED ABOUT THIS MATTER AND ALL OTHERS DISCOVERED.

AS I CHECK THE SERVICE SCHEDULE FOR 1999 1.8T ENGINES, I DISCOVER THAT TIMING BELT TENSIONERS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO INSPECTION PRIOR TO 105,000 MILES

AT WHICH TIME IT SHOULD BE REPLACED. THAT MEANS
THAT YOU EXPECT THIS PART TO LAST AT LEAST TO THAT
MILEAGE (105,000). HOW THEN, DO YOU EXPLAIN A
FAILURE IN HALF THAT MILEAGE? USING THE DESIGN FLAW
PREMISE, I CAN EXPECT TO DISCOVER MANY FAILURES AT
SIMILAR MILEAGE, BECAUSE YOU MADE MANY THE SAME
WAY. I NEED ONLY ASK OWNERS IN MASS.

I AM INFORMING YOU OF ANOTHER OWNER EXPERIENCING
THE SAME FAILURE AT 58,000 MILES, CAUSING THE SAME
DAMAGE, AND YOU WOULD NOT REIMBURSE. WITH MY METHOD
OF CONTACTING OWNERS I EXPECT MANY, MANY MORE. I WILL
SPEAR-HEAD THE ASSAULT ON YOUR COMPANY. HOW FAR DO
YOU WANT ME TO GO? YOU ALREADY KNOW WHAT CAN
AND WILL BE DISCOVERED.

REIMBURSE PLEASE,



March 2, 2004
040066193

SECOND RESPONSE LETTER



EUGENE OR

Customer Care
Mail Code 2 West
Hills Corporate Center
3477 West Hamlin
Rochester Hills, MI 48309
Tel. (800) 822-8987

RE: 1999 Volkswagen Passat
VIN: WVWMA63B0XE328045

Dear

Thank you for allowing Volkswagen of America, Inc. the opportunity to address these your concerns. After his review, Mr. Gord Klaus asked our department to make a written response. The limited powertrain warranty for the above vehicle advises in the warranty manual under Damages or Malfunction Due to Abuse, Negligence, Alteration, Accident or Fire:

This warranty does not cover damage or malfunction which is the result of improper repair of the vehicle, improper installation of accessories, modifications to the vehicle (including the engine management system), intentional or unintentional misfueling, use of the vehicle in competitive events, damage caused by accident or fire, defects or failures resulting from the use of new parts not sold or approved by Volkswagen, or used parts, or the resultant damage to associated parts or systems.

This warranty does not cover vehicles severely damaged and/or declared to be a total loss by the insurer, vehicles substantially reassembled or repaired from parts obtained from another vehicle previously in operation, failures resulting from continued operation of the vehicle after a warning light, gauge reading or other indications of a mechanical or operational problem.

We have been advised Mr. Kirkoski, an improper repair was completed at Independent. It was declined warranty coverage based on improper repair of the vehicle.

Sincerely,

Sally Eberle

Sally Eberle
Regional Coordinator
VOLKSWAGEN OF AMERICA, INC.

**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).**