



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 100216

Date Received

Repository ☐

24 JUL 9:05
08-AUG-2004

Reference No.
10087521

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name [REDACTED]
Address [REDACTED]
City OAKLAND 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 authorized signature, please provide your name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.

Signature of Owner [REDACTED] Date 8/19/04

VEHICLE INFORMATION

17 digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side
453BG8858V [REDACTED] Make SUBARU Model LEGACY Outback Model Year 1998
Date Purchased 9/27/97 Dealer's Name and Telephone Number Albany Ford Subaru 510-528-1244
Original Owner ☒ Dealer's City Albany State CA Zip Code 94706 Engine: No. Cylinders 4 Fuel Type: regular unleaded gasoline
Transmission Type ☒ Antilock Brakes Powertrain Vehicle Component Code 051000 ENGINE AND ENGINE COOLING:ENGINE
AUTOMATIC ☒ Cruise Control Multiple Failure: 1

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s) 23-JUL-2004 Failure Mileage 72,580 Failure Speed 80 Blown head gasket resulting in overheating; damage included warped cylinder heads, damaged belts, ignition wires, etc.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Make [REDACTED] Tire Model (Name or Number) [REDACTED] Tire Size (Example P215/85R15) [REDACTED]
DOT No. (Example: DOTM18ABCD38) ☐ 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), crash(es), and injury(ies).)

Crash ☐ Yes ☒ No Fire ☐ Yes ☒ No Number of Persons Injured 0 Number of Deaths 0 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).

WHILE DRIVING 80 MPH VEHICLE STALLED. CONSUMER WAS UNABLE TO RESTART VEHICLE. IT WAS TOWED TO A GARAGE FOR INSPECTION, AND MECHANIC DETERMINED THAT THE HEAD GASKET NEEDED TO BE REPLACED DUE TO A BLOW OUT. *AK
While exiting a 25 minute drive on freeway, engine stopped suddenly and without warning. Was unable to restart + "batteries" + "check engine" lights were on, temp. @ high. (Had safety check on 6/4, air conditioner refilled 6/18, oil change 6/28 and was current with all maintenance since had bought car. With AAA, restarted engine 25 minutes later - but ran rough + copious amounts of steam. Found coolant splattered under hood + gunk on ground. Garage reported blown head gasket, low in oil, engine knocking - poss. cracked

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 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 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)

engine block. Had car towed (1208) to own mechanic in Oakland who replaced
both cylinder heads, timing belt, spark plug (later spark plug wires), belt, belt
AC compressor belt, PCV valve, motor oil & filter, coolant, etc. I believe
I had a defective head gasket from Subaru (the original owner) for it to blow
@ 72,000 miles. Many others have complained of same - see attachments

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

U.S. Department
of Transportation

National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

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Washington, D.C. 20590

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

Oakland, CA

August 19, 2004

John Nakamura
President
Albany Ford Subaru
718 San Pablo Ave.
Albany, CA 94706

Thank you so much for your understanding conversation on the phone last Friday regarding the blown headgaskets @ ~72,000 miles on my 1998 Subaru Legacy Outback that I purchased new from your dealership! I have enclosed copies of my records/receipts for regular maintenance, as well as the financial costs involved with repairing the car. I had to take my car in twice related to the overheating/ blown headgasket: once for the head gasket repair job , and the second time less than a week later as the engine ran rougher and rougher and the "check engine" light came on. Apparently the spark plug wires were just slightly damaged from the overheating, so they were replaced.

I know I have ALWAYS enjoyed GREAT SERVICE from your establishment! I do have a ~\$2700.00 problem with Subaru due to defective headgaskets/ engine per the internet. I hope to obtain full reimbursement since this is a relatively common defect on the 2.5L engine, and because I enjoy the way the car handles when it is running well, so I don't want to sell it. In fact, before this problem I have two friends who purchased Outbacks based on my recommendations.

Also, since my new head gasket is the three layer model, as service manager, do you recommend I have the four layer gasket installed? And if so, when? After my car was repaired, I heard the defect is in the three layer gasket, and that I should have had a four layer gasket installed....and of course, I need a dependable family car.

Thanks again for your past great service, current attention and advice, and in advance for "pleading my cause" to Subaru.

Sincerely,

Oakland, CA



Print Close Window

Dear Ms. [REDACTED]

Thank you for your message. I am truly sorry you've been unhappy with your Subaru ownership experience and I will make sure that your concerns are communicated to the appropriate parties here at Subaru.

I'm sure that you wrote to us because it was important for you to share your feelings about this concern. I recognize that your time is valuable and I appreciate your taking some of that time to share your thoughts with us. I'd really like to know what I can do to help retain you as a Subaru customer. Could you please contact me and tell me if there is a way I can help change your opinions about us and our vehicles? While I might not be able to help you with the direct expenses you've incurred because your vehicle is well outside the warranty, I'd like to try to do something to earn your loyalty to our products.

[REDACTED] you are important to us. I would really appreciate the opportunity to demonstrate that to you. Please give me a call at 1-800-782-2783 and refer to case number [REDACTED]

Fred Rice

Subaru of

America-----

YOUR ORIGINAL MAIL:

My 1998 Outback blew head gaskets with virtually no warning while exiting a freeway 7/23. It has only 72,000 miles on it, and I always get maintenance work done before the recommended time. I had safety check 6/4, air conditioner refreoned 6/18, oil change 6/28. This is a failure on the part of the vehicle: 106 similar cases of blown headgaskets on 2.5L engines are listed on internet. Subaru reimburses '99 to present models for same problem, so please reimburse me. Depending on extent of damage, expect bill to be [REDACTED] although mechanic states may exceed present value of car!

First name: [REDACTED]

Last name: [REDACTED]

null

Skip's Head Gasket Failure Guestbook

So... you've blown a head gasket. Be sure to sign the guestbook to log another head gasket failure. Hopefully we can get enough instances to show Subaru that a recall is justified.

Click here to sign the guestbook...

: Thanks for the great response. Sad to see so many people have had problems. This list is only for people who have had head gasket failures. I edit it from time to time to remove the non-failures. Subaru has made a small offering for people with 99+ 2.5's. They will put a bottle of stop-leak in the cooling system and extend the warranty to 100k. They are also reimbursing people who have had head gasket failures. Sadly, they are still choosing to ignore owners of the Phase I 2.5's.

Some people have also expressed interest in a class action lawsuit. While I am not interested in organizing one (I've already cut my losses with this car - I'll never buy a Subaru again), email me and I will post any related links and info here. Thanks...

*: A few people have emailed me asking me to post links to
 . As far as I know, they only investigate safety defects in vehicles. They have the power to require manufacturers to recall vehicles for safety related defects, but do not have any power over non-safety related defects. It can't hurt to register a complaint, but don't hold your breath...*

On another note, I finally put my money where my mouth is and traded in my Outback for a 2004 Jetta TDI Wagon. Though I traded it in at a loss (I owed more than they were willing to give), I had strong suspicions that the head gasket was on its way south again (only 30k miles later). I've been meaning to write Subaru again, and I post any response I get back here.

Again, thanks for the great response, and feel free to drop me a line if I can be of any help. - Skip

Questions or comments can be sent to

(leave the nospam IN to reach me)

Feel free to print this out and include it in your correspondence with Subaru.

Name:	Location:	Model:	Engine:	Mileage:	Comments:
[REDACTED]	King of Prussia, Pa	97 Outback	2.5L	72,000	Read Subaru's reply

[REDACTED]	Keyport, Wa	98 Outback	2.5L	94,000	
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Subaru's reply: 1/30/2003 "We are sorry to learn of the circumstances that prompted your contact. No technical bulletins have issued in reference to the condition you have described. Therefore, we must rely on the expertise of an authorized Subaru Dealership to handle this matter. Because they have the advantage of a hands-on inspection your local Subaru Dealership is in the best position to inspect the vehicle to address your concerns. Unfortunately, the life expectancy

of any mechanical component is indefinite. As a result, we issue the Subaru Powertrain Warranty with the hopes that any problems you may experience will be taken care of without expense to you. However, as you may be aware, that warranty expired at 60,000 miles. Beyond the warranty period, we are not in a position to offer financial assistance with repairs unless there is a recall on the component. There are no open recalls pertaining to your vehicle at this time. Should a recall ever be issued on this, or any other vehicle component, we will contact you by mail. Should you have any additional questions or concerns, feel free to call our Customer/Dealer services Dept at 1-800-SUBARU-3. Best Wishes."

Weeping external

Driver side head gasket failure. Replaced under warranty

Water pump suddenly failed. It was repaired, I was told all was fine. First day out on the highway, the car overheated, and it turned out that all head gaskets were blown. I've just heard of TOO many people with similar or even identical stories. I hope many of them sign this guestbook. Thanks so much.

Had an external coolant leak, head gaskets replaced at 102,558 miles on 8/26/03. We had the car to a Subaru dealer at 26K and 45K for loss of coolant which they said was a normal amount of loss, and "dealer could not duplicate". Opened a case with Subaru, hopefully they will offer some

San Mateo, Ca 99 Forester 2.5L 89,000

glee29 Columbus, Ohio 02 OBW Limited 2.5L 22,000

Robin Einzig Medford, MA 97 Outback 2.5L 82,000

Oregon 97 Legacy 2.5L 100,023

Athol, Ma 98 Forester 2.5L 117,000

Harpers Ferry, WV 00 OBW 2.5L 103,800

goodwill toward the repair. Other than this we love the car, will likely get another Subaru, just not a 2.5L.

Called Subaru customer service, they deny any pattern of HG failure. I note on the web that they have redesigned the HG SLX times, however!!

Both head gaskets blew. Engine gasses enter the radiator and blow out the coolant, thus causing sudden overheating to redline w/in two minutes. Others I've known w/this engine have had same problems with far less mileage. The local dealer gets on average of 3 head gasket job per week in a this small city. Its a shame that Subaru lie to their customers and refuse to recall these engines! One reason that I bought one is that back in the 80's they would correct faulty components usually w/in 2 years. Their cars are overpriced and the engines loose rattle buckets. I have yet to find one that doesn't have noisy valves at least until warm up. Heat shield rattle, etc. makes them embarrassing to drive. Subaru USA, you better get your act together, because you lost a lot of long time customers!

Head gasket blew at 105000 miles and now cylinders are losing compression at 125000 miles. I have to get a new engine. This is not a car for mountain driving!

Complete crap that this happens with such low mileage.

Thanks, Skip

Head gasket went. Warranty replace. (lucky with 100k add sec.) Now warranty is over (103k) and the oil separator plate has started

	Lunenburg, MA	97 Outback Limited	2.5L	130,000
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	West Virginia	97 Outback Wagon	2.5L	187,000
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	Seattle, WA	98 Outback	2.5L	105,000
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	South Bend, IN	00 Outback Wagon	2.5L	67,000
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	Hedgesville, WV	99 Forester	2.5L	102,000
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	Easton, PA	99 Outback	2.5L	116,000
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	Charlottesville, VA	99 Legacy Outback Wgn	2.5L	99,000
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leaking. Thanks subaru technicians! I'm pissed.

Started overheating, took it in, \$2700 later has a new head gasket and clutch.

I bought Subaru because of perceived reliability, never again!

Was spitting the coolant and over-heating. New head gaskets fixed it for now. I like the car.

Hopefully SUBARU will try to keep the image by helping with the expenses to change the head gasket and designing the right head gasket for the 2.5-liter engine.

The car overheated once, limped it home, discovered the overflow tank had puked coolant all over the place. Replaced the thermostat and radiator cap with Subaru OEM parts. A few days later, the same thing happened. With my warranty about to expire, I figured I'd better get it to the dealer. Diagnosis - blown head gasket(s) (I don't know if it was just one or both). While still within the 1yr/unlimited mileage parts warranty I experienced the same symptoms. Went back to the same dealer (this was back when I lived in southeastern CT) and they performed the repairs again. This time they used the newer 4-layer gasket. 45,000 miles later (as of Oct '03) I haven't had another problem.

I had the first set blow right after a dealer did a coolant flush/fill. Dropped in a junkyard engine and just had it blow a gasket set.

this happened in october 2001 & october 2002!

Actually, I'm not posting this for myself but for my father and also for my close friend, both of their Outbacks ('97 and '98 respectively, had blown head gaskets at about

	Oakland, CA	1997 Legacy Outback	2.5L	72,000
	Halifax, NS	98 Outback Ltd	2.5	130,000km (78,000 mi)
	Krastev	98 Legacy	2.5	85,000
	Pearl Harbor, HI	1997 Legacy 2.5GT	2.5L	59,750 and 75,000
	Ringwood, NJ	1998 2.5GT wagon	2.5L	1st-96K, 2nd--70K on engine
brad edwards	douglasville, ga	98 impreza	2.5rs	60's & 80's
	Fort Worth, TX	1998 Outback	2.5L	98,000

[REDACTED]	Harrisburg, PA.	'98 Outback Wgn	2.5 DOHC	166,000
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96K each. They were diagnosed as "cracked engine block". I am now struggling on if I should replace the head gasket in my own 98 Suby pre-emptively.

Car running good until timing belt tensioner mounting bolt snapped. Cheap Jap steel! One stinking bolt trashed the valves. What a bunch of crap. Warning: if you change your belt replace that bolt (and tensioner).

[REDACTED]	Deering/NH	98 Forester	2.5L	102,000
	Waterbury Center, VT	98 Outback	2.5L	124,000

Changed both sides myself. Found your site half way through the job...

[REDACTED]	St. Louis MO	1998 Forester	2.5L	roughly 74,000
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I think my heads are getting ready to go too. Temp gauge started to rise on its own. Had the thermostat replaced 2 weeks ago (Last week of Nov. 2003) Now after about 10 minutes on the highway at 65mph the temp goes all the way past the H then it will drop down to mid range once or twice but pretty much pegs out at H. I can see the fluid boiling in the resevoir and it is being pushed out of the resevoir. Mechanic just had the radiator boiled and reinstalled today. I'll know if it overheats on my way home.

[REDACTED]	BC Canada	1998 Forester	2.5L	120,000 km
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Blew very suddenly 5 mins out on Freeway. Car meticulously maintained using Mobil one from 30k kms. Engine in perfect order once taken down. The Subaru dealer made the comment that it was in better condition than some he had seen taken down at 30k kms. The valves were like new etc. Failure was due to poor gasket material by the look of it. Not altogehter disimilar to the 3.0L V6 gasket problems of Toyota. Mind you they admitted the problem and have a recall on them. I will be writing to Subaru to see what they

can do but after reading this website hold little hope of that. The NHTSA site at <http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/ivoq/> is also a place to log your problems .

Head gasket blown, although I am a very conservative driver and the climate is mild. Go figure.

First symptoms were overheating and coolant overflow at 100,000. It has been the best part of a year before the symptoms returned (sporadic loss of interior hot air, coolant gauge maxed, etc.) No need to test for combustion gas in coolant, it smells like the tail pipe already. A good friend who also has a 97 Wagon has recently had his head gaskets replaced after experiencing overheating problems also. This is clearly a design fault of the heads/gaskets (as evidenced by the multiple Subaru re-designs of the gaskets). It is more than disappointing that Subaru does not consider this a recall.

Circumstantial evidence suggests a 20% failure rate. Head Gasket failure during the normal course of operation is very rare these days (unless there is an inherent fault). I will be repairing this problem myself but have lost faith in Subaru (after also previously owning a 1986 wagon). I can no longer consider Subaru a manufacturer of above-average quality (or of above-average customer service).

Replaced external HG's at 42k along with water pump. Same symptoms reoccurring at 71k. TWO HG replacements on a '99 with 71K?!

presently being repaired under warranty.

San Diego, CA 1998 Outback 2.5L 53,000

Salt Lake City, UT 1998 Outback Wagon 2.5L 107,000

Blandon, PA 99 Forester 2.5L 71125

2000 obw ltd 2.5 50070

[REDACTED] Eugene, OR 1997 Loyale Outback 2.5 109,000

Just bought the car 2 months ago, part of the thermostat was removed (by dealer?) to cover up the blown head gasket. Car didn't overheat because coolant was constantly running through the engine. Mechanic replaced thermostat and car overheated within 10 minutes. Last car I owned, a 1991 Loyale, also had blown all of the seals, with repair costing more than value of car. I used to love Subaru wagons. I am feeling very distrustful of all Subarus at this point. Unfortunately, there isn't much I can do except go deeper into debt.

[REDACTED] Saint Charles, IL 2000 Outback Wagon 2.5L 45,623

Was first advised of this condition by my son in Colorado who drives a '97 Outback wagon after he learned from his mechanic that head gasket failure is not confined to just '97s. I have every confidence that our fabulous dealer (Gerald Subaru in No. Aurora, IL) will do everything in their power to make our car right. The guestbook has been printed and mailed to them for comment. As soon as I hear from them, I will report back to you all.

[REDACTED] Olalla, Washington 2000 Forester 2.5L 74,000

Head gasket failure, allowing coolant to leak outside of head, maybe inside too.

[REDACTED] Street, MD 1999 Forester 2.5L 120K
[REDACTED] La Crescenta, CA 97 Outback 2.5 140000

Thanks for the info Skip - I really appreciate it.

[REDACTED] Boulder 96 Legacy Wagon 2.5 97K

Terrific resource. Your work is much appreciated. So much for the "Bullet-proof" Subaru reputation.

[REDACTED] Minneapolis, MN 2000 OB Wagon 2.5 64000

Right side HG leak found by my mechanic (not dealer mechanic). Took car to deal and they replaced the right HG under warranty despite being 4000 miles over.

[REDACTED] CT 2002 Outback/Wagon 2.5L EJ251 13,426

During routine service the dealer discovered L/S head gasket seeping. The car has 13k on it!

Scheduled for warranty repair this week. I have found many instances of similar failures with recent vintage Subaru 2.5L engines in a few minutes of searching at alt.autos.subaru in the newsgroups. Come on Subaru of America! Extend the warranty on this issue! Thank you Skip, for your efforts here.

Drivers side head gasket leaking. Both sides replaced under warranty.

I'm on my third "RU" and always felt the cars were bulletproof. However this is somewhat disturbing news. I learned of your website from a good friend in Northern Virginia. His 97 Legacy 2.5 overheated twice at 110,000 miles. Both times the dealer could not diagnose anything. They guessed it was either a bad headgasket or a cracked block. Since the car was now unreliable he sold it. Another long time customer lost.

Bubbles coming up through the coolant overflow bottle. I'm replacing the engine with a remanufactured 2.2L motor from CCR. No more 2.5L motor for me, thank you!

Car showed all the classic signs of BHG (I also have a 91 Supra so I'm very familiar with BHGs), dealer pressurized cooling system and found squat. Duh, 15 psi vs 140+ psi of compression? Come on. Told them I did a combustion block test and it failed, so they took my word for it. Luckily, I had the extended warranty so that covered the repairs.

Head gasket blew and car overheated. My wife pulled over and shut the car off. We had it towed to the dealer and were told it had air in the radiator and they

[REDACTED] Rochester, NY 2001 Outback Ltd 2.5 42000

[REDACTED] Bowie, Maryland 1998 Forrester 2.5 61000

[REDACTED] Salt Lake City, UT '98 Outback Wagon 2.5 L 110,000

[REDACTED] Chicago, IL 1998 Legacy 2.5 59,000

[REDACTED] Pike, New York 1999 Outback 2.5 DOHC 140,000

vacuumed the air out and they said everything was fine. My wife drove the car to work the next day and exactly the same thing happened. It overheated, she pulled over and let it cool and called AAA. The car was towed and we were told it needed a new thermostat. I asked if they could check the head gaskets, and after some prodding they agree to check them. They found the leak this time but the damage had already been done. One warped head, and a very very small crack where the radiator end cap is crimped on.

I've driven Subarus and Hondas for years. My last Subaru before the Outback was a 94 Loyale Wgn. which was a great car, I learned to put up with the oil leaks which seemed to be never ending. I fixed them myself only to have them reappear. I'm not a novice mechanic, I'm certified to rebuild airplane engines and air frames and have restored antique Cord automobiles. The Loyale engine had design faults but was repairable and dependable. The phase 1 2.5 engine is an abomination. When my head gaskets failed I torn down the engine (to the crank) bearings were thin, pistons scored, wrist pins looked as though someone had been teething on them. I checked the heads, they weren't warped so it was simply head gasket failure because of poor design I suspect. I won't put this engine back in again. I'm in the process on fitting a 2.2 which I just finished going over. Subaru should do the same thing and use the 2.5s to build artificial reefs

Head Gaskets went, internal leak on this one, Dealer contacted, said since not original owner not covered, Last subaru I will own.

	Phila Pa	97 Outback	2.5	85,000
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	Treadwell, NY	1999 Outback	2.5 DOHC	53,750
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	mystic, ct	2000 outback	2.2	102,301	Blown headgasket. Almost all highway miles. \$1,400 for repairs. The car has been eating oil and coolant since I had my 90k mile service done at 87k miles. Prior to that, two oil leaks were diagnosed at the front crank seal and rear oil separator cover. A shade under 92k miles, the headgaskets finally gave as determined by the local dealer this morning. Total estimate at this time is \$2000. This makes me sad. SOA should be paying for this, but to make up for the travesty, they can buy me an EJ20T instead.
	Plainfield, IL	99 Legacy SUS	2.5L	~92k	
	New york, Ny	2000 legacy wagon	2.5L	72,000	driver side hg leaking coolant outside.
	paso robles, ca	1997 outback	2.5	105,000	
	alamosa, CO	1997, Outback	2.5L	127,000	My 1997 Subaru Outback overheated once three months ago and letting it sit and topping off the radiator "fixed" the problem for approx 90 days. Then car began to overheat after driving 40-80 highway miles. limping along, temperature gauge would rise, fall and rise again with me stopping the car each time it rose. Then, after about 20 minutes of screwing around like this, the cars' thermostat would drop and I would be able to drive a couple of hundred miles before it happened again. Thermostat was replaced 2 times by mechanic. If it is a blown head gasket, why doesn't it overheat every time I get in the car?
	Alden, New York	1998 Outback Wagon	2.5L	133,000	Internal leak causing overheating. \$2,000 repair
	Salem, OR	97 Legacy Outback	2.5L	158,000	
	Lansing, MI	2000 Outback	2.5L	34,400	After the gasket was replaced the "special conditioner" plugged up the cooling system and blew the radiator. That was not covered!

	Cambridge, MA	98 Outback	2.5L	55k, 75k	Gaskets blew for a second time at 75k miles. First repair was under warranty, second repair's gonna be \$1500.
	cheshire, mass	97 legacy outback	2.5l	110,000	replaced gaskets 1-03 -were leaking Noticed fluidleaking from dr head gasket while changing my oil. Took car to dealer and he confrimed drs H/G leaking externally. Was going to replace H/G but SOA tech support told them to add coolant conditioner. My car never overheated or spit exhaust gases into the cooling system . 4k miles later had mt #2and#4 pistons replaced with new desighned pistons to cure my piston slap noise . While the engine was out of the car had both H/G replaced . All work done under warrenty . Not one cent came out of my pocket .
	Wildwood NJ	02 Outback	2.5L Phase 2	32,000	Headgasket appeared fine, but had to replace exhaust valves and short block because of heat damage. I'm compiling info to see if a class action is a viable solution.
	Putnam CT	99 OB wagon	2.5	130K	I bought my Legacy almost six months ago cause of Subaru's reputation for quality and reliability. Three months ago I had to replace my crank seal for leaking oil and they talked me into replacing water pump, thermostat, timing belt, tensioner, oil pump Oring, and more. I noticed a brief temp spike a month ago. shut the car off and it worked fine 15 min. then last friday it happened again so i towed it back to the dealership that did my work thinking it was a fluky thermostat they put in, NO IT WAS A BLOWN HEADGASKET AT ONLY 87K! They say it will cost 2000+ to repair, I am going to contact SOA tommorrow , I left a message for the service manager of the place i
	San Diego, CA	97 Legacy GT	2.5L	87,000	

dropped \$850 three months ago and told me about my headgasket, Now i am looking online and seeing hundreds of people like me , I am going to take this to the top!!!! call me if you want to join my crusade to get this headgasket issue recalled!!!!
diverdave9000@yahoo.com

Head gasket blown on both sides of motor, leaking antifreeze and oil. Vehicle was repaired under manufacturer warranty. A few weeks later, I got the recall letter.

Had left side headgasket replaced at 64000 miles. I had to call Subaru & complain. They paid the labor, I paid the parts.(\$150) Last week I got the recall & they put stopleak in it. I just wrote a letter to Subaru & the dealer. I'm looking to get a new engine paid by Subaru.

2 HG's so far I guess the next one's on me as Subaru feels two HG repairs is enough! Why recall when you can wait for the car to go off warranty?

Design flaw...Way too many cases for it not to be. HELP ME Subaru.

At least it waited until 100,000...

Intermittant overheating after high RPM situations after 2 days at dealer they managed to reproduce and have deterimed head gaskets need to be replaced. Luckiliy still under 30 day used car warranty.

engine blew abt 48000 miles & at 55000 it started chronic overheating again.. i guess the Subaru dealer rebuild used the same old design faulty head gaskets with the sealant additive in the coolant... which is a patch not a cure... you have to kjeep adding the stuff every 6 months/5000 miles or you get chronic overheat

Summerhill, PA 2000 Legacy 2.5L 49,000

Racine, WI 2000 Outback 2.5L 70000

Bethel Maine 2000 Outback Wagon 2.5L 60k & 90,000

Saratoga, CA. 1997 Outback 2.5 99,800

Stockton, CA 1999 Subaru Outback 2.5L 105,366

Franklin, MA '99 legacy OB 2.5L 73,000

Maplewood NJ 1999 Legacy GT wagon 2.5L 60000

again...

Had a big oil leak from front seal last year, did the belts and front seals then. did the head gaskets and water pump this year. Thanks for a great site and lots of helpful info. It saved me plenty over dealer cost

3rd and last Subie I'll ever buy

Already replaced clutch and had problems with the lights going out and the air conditioner had to be fixed

Well, I finally blew mine at about 74,000 miles. I guess I kind of expected it, but it still sucks. After my last run at the Oklahoma City autocross a couple of Sundays ago, I noticed a splash of coolant in the area of the overflow bottle. (I open the hood after each run to release heat from the engine bay).

Hmmm... never seen that before.

Well, I load up all my crap and head home, watching the gauge like a hawk. After about 5 miles, I exited off the highway and checked under the hood. Bubbles in the overflow bottle while the engine was running. CRAP!! What to do? I've got a 100 mile drive to get home, it's 5:30 on Sunday afternoon, and I don't want to wait for a ride or get the car towed.

Decided to just drive it home and see what happens. Watched the gauge (which I know doesn't always indicate a problem), watched out the back window for copious amounts of steam or smoke, ran the heater and monitored for cool air, and prayed. Well, I made it home just fine, and then just kind of poked around on it for the next week or so, without really driving it. Changed the radiator cap and thermostat, just as a 'wishful thinking' kind of repair. No help. It couldn't be blown too

	Hazleton, Pa	1997 Legacy Outback	2.5	99,000
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	Denver, CO	1998 Outback	2.5	88,000
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	Bothell, WA	2002, Impreza RS		35,0000
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	Tulsa, OK	1998 Legacy GT Sedan- 5spd	2.5	74,235
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bad. I suppose it's probably classified as a leaking headgasket, since I drove it about 150 miles after I first noticed the symptoms. I'm glad it happened at the autocross, where I actually open the hood and look around a bit. If it would've happened any other time, there's no telling how long it would've gone unnoticed, leading to catastrophic failure. Looking at about \$1400 at the local dealership, for both heads. With 74k miles, I'd just as soon have them both done at the same time.

Head Gasket about to go (leaking coolant) This is my second- I inherited one that had 80,000 miles and blew a head gasket at 110,000. I wish I had seen this site then. This was definately my last Subaru.

Does the conditioner work? Did Subaru redesign the headgaskets? Should Subaru replace all the involved gaskets noe? I will join a class action suit. contact me at shepardsherwood@hotmail.com Subaru told me that they did not redesign the head gaskets. Everyone should complain to the center for auto safety and th HTS. Extending the wwarranty is not a solution. People expect their vehicles to last 150000 miles without major problems.

Vehicle purchased used 6/00 in NJ with 45K miles. Third day on road, radiator failure results in severe overheating, presumed HG failure. Dealership replaces engine under warranty. Nearly four years and 65K miles later, I pushed my luck with a presumed thermostat failure and subsequent overheating; both HG blown, leaving me stranded 100+ miles from home. Nearest dealership recommends another engine

New City, NY 1998 Legacy Outback Wagon 2.5 L 110,000

Monroe Ct 97 and 01 legacy outback 2.5 98 76000, 01 67000

Jericho, VT '98 Legacy Wagon 2.5L 45K, 110K

replacement (\$4700-\$5100 for engines with 80K miles and new HG's, warranties 30-day or 1-year, respectively). I must decide how to invest to regain my mobility. This guestbook will be a great resource as I contemplate the "if's". Ah, Subaru. I was proud, now my faith is shaken. It will hurt to jump to Team Audi, or VW, if that is the direction I must take...

The same old story: spike overheating, coolant blown out the overflow. Replace thermostat, radiator cap (who immediately thinks HG with a "good" company -- and I raced in SCCA competition many, many years ago). Intermittent periods w/o overheating, then loss of coolant, cool heater, spiked gauge. Finally bubbles and crud in radiator/overflow. Dealer finds compression leak into left #2, replaces head and gasket and eats \$750 of the \$1,500 for being a loyal, multiple Subaru, customer. This is in October of '03. Other 2.5s recalled in Feb. '04, but not the our '99 Legacy GT! Subaru of America says we got the best deal, as our model not included in recall after "extensive study." Riiiiight! They obviously have a HG issue here, so own up and do the right thing for all failures even at our 84K highway mileage. Class action sounds good to me! This model counts as two, as my Dad used to say, my first and my last -- mainly because of Subaru's attitude re. owning-up, not that issues like this can't happen to any design, but take responsibility for ALL instances of a known defect.

About 2000 miles earlier, drained and flushed very dirty coolant (not oil). Coolant again showing signs of dirty buildup; overheated at 1000 miles into 4 day trip. Both

Englewood, NJ 99 Legacy GT 2.5L 84,000

Portland, OR 98 Legacy Outback 2.5L 123,124

heads machined. Total cost at dealer \$1976 (April, 2004).

Woodbridge, CT 97 Outback 2.5L 79,000

Chino Hills, CA 00 Outback 2.5L 80,000

Class action? I can be reached at matt@streamtech.com

Kalamazoo, MI 98 Outback 2.5L 58,000

Replaced head gasket and pistons (1) at 58k under warranty in February 2001. No problems since then, currently at 95k.

Taos, NM 97 GT Wagon 5 Speed 2.5 120K

Blew head gasket in first 2 weeks. Nice car had engine design. Want new engine but car is not worth investing in.

Livermore, CA 97 Outback 2.5L 135,000

I won't be buying another Subaru!

Atlanta, GA 1998 Legacy 2.5GT 100,500

Water pump and timing belt replaced by Subaru dealer AT 100K and they asked me if my car is overheating several times but I just said no because I was doing recommended maintenance and just wanted my car in the best condition and 500 miles after that my car started over heating nad I went back to Subaru dealer and he said that my head gasket is blown and that I might have crack in the engine block and he said that BHG was common in 2.5 Dohc and I was sooo upset because I did all the maintenace there and they wiuoldn't tell me anything. My boyfriend is fixing my car today. Keep m eposted if you hear anything new. zknezevi@spsu.edu

Monroe Ct 98 and 01 2.5 77000 on 98 67000 on 01

Everyone should contact the center for auto safety file a complaint and check the box stating you are intrested in a class action suit.

Waterville, MAine 1997 Legacy GT 2.5L 99,000

Blew it and never even knew i blew it until I opened the hood.

Cumberland, RI 1999 Legacy GT 2.5L 120000

Same problem here. Had a mechanic try and diagnose the problem with no avail. Subaru dealer took 30 minutes to tell me it was the head gaskets. Now I know

	Bar Harbor, ME	97 OBW	2.5	125,000	why it was so quick. Waiting for my mechanic to repair HG and see if problem is resolved. Having driven Subarus for 25 years I was surprised to have this one overheat one day and have the dealer tell me it needed a head gasket. I asked the service manager if these engines were known for head gasket problems and he said no, just one of those things. This was in 12-03. Now they tell us the engine needs a valve job...
	Ft. Collins, CO	97 Legacy Outback	2.2	125000	Losing coolant, no external leaks, overheating, no obvious signs of antifreeze in the oil. Mechanic is baffled. He thinks that is might be headgasket but cant tell without pulling the head. Any ideas please help. email jlpnco@aol.com
	Louisville, Ky	40207	2.5L	110,000	About a month ago it had a sweet smell and we checked the coolant and it was brown. The repair shop tested the coolant and found no hydrocarbons in it. Since then it overheated on the highway and blew all of the coolant out. The mechanic sent out the heads to have them tested - no cracks - so they rehoned them and replaced the gaskets. \$1700 later we are going to trade it in. I really hate this because I loved the way it drove but after reading this guestbook I'll never buy another Subaru again.
	Thousand Oaks, CA	1998 Outback	2.5	125000	My problem was a .040" divit in the surface of the head. This was causing my overheating problem by allowing air to get into the system. Thanks for your website it was very useful.
	Martinez, CA	1999 Legacy Outback LTD 30 yr An	2.5l	98000	
	Canberra, ACT,Australia	1998 Legacy	2.5	100k miles	Head gaskets blew with no warning. One day a good car the

next it was crap

Purchased the car 5000 miles ago from an independent individual. At first oil change Subaru indicated that the car was in awesome condition. Last week, overheated and check engine light came on. I was not driving and do not know how long it had been hot. Blown head gasket, warped/scored head. New engine being installed as we speak at a cost of \$4600. The service manager did not want to tell me that this was an ongoing problem. He finally confessed that they do 1-3 head gaskets per week! These are regular, non-turbo charged cars. Anyone had success in getting Subaru to pay for repairs? My engine is the 1st stage and therefore not covered under the warranty.

jennifer_pierce@yahoo.com

It looks as though I have joined the ranks of those suffering from a blown head gasket on their 2.5L. It has been a painfully expensive induction.

because of evidence of blow by (soot in intake manifold) I got a rebuilt engine from CCR.

Took car in for 90,000 tune up. Engine was flushed, two days later thermostat went crazy. Took it back to Subaru and they said it was a head gasket and unrelated to tune up and engine flush. Subaru claimed no responsibility

\$1800 to fix, My domestics and '89 GL was much more reliable.

No help from subaru

I bought this car below blue book expecting bad things. Sure

Denver, CO 1999 Legacy Outback 2.5L 99700

Portland, OR 97 Legacy Outback 2.5L 115K

Greeley, CO 96 GT wagon 2.5 liter 156000

Coopersburg, Pa 1997 limited outback wagon 2.5L 94,000

Meriden, CT 1997 Legacy Outback 2.5 148,000

Homer NY 97 outback 2.5l 130,000

Milford, CT 1999 Impreza 2.5 88000

Treadwell NY 1999 Outback 2.5 56000

Seattle 1998 Outback Wagon Limited 2.5L 145000

enough...blown head gasket. Exhaust in the coolant. Poor engine design no doubt. I'll sink the money into the car. My 83 Subaru GL is still running strong at 160000+ miles showing no signs of quitting. Something went wrong with the 2.5L design...an engineer needs to be slapped.

Replaced head gasket last month. Total cost about \$2,300.

Symptoms the same as everyone else. Loss of coolant, overheating, bad smells, etc. Of course, Subaru didn't cover a 97, but it sounds just like all of the problems with 98s. Bummer. Does anyone really think that the Subaru additive will help prolong my new gasket?

	Carlsbad, CA	1997 Outback	2.5L	91,000
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	Baltimore, MD	'98 Outback	2.5	120000
	Boise, Idaho	1997 Outback Wagon	2.5L	126,000

Symptoms started around 116,000 miles.

Just had head gaskets replaced (basically engine rebuild) last week. Cost \$1,900 CDN Currently pursuing with Subaru Canada as work was not covered under warranty. (just over 100,000Km) Would be interested in other Canadians who are pursuing with Subaru Canada. Should be covered under Service Program from U.S.

	Burlington, Ontario, Canada	1999 Outback, Manual Trans.	2.5L	118,000Km
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	San Jose, CA	1997 Legacy Outback	2.5	140000
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Blown Head Gasket Im getting a Toyota

	San Jose, CA	97 Outback	2.5	90000
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Blow head gasket at around 90K. Same symptoms as most: Sudden spike in temperature. Water in the exhaust. Around \$2000 for repair. ir. Decidedly mixed experiences with the two dealers in the area.

	Des Moines Iowa	1998 Forrester	2.5	75,000
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A few months after the car had been serviced by suburu (as it always had been), the car rapidly overheated for no apparent reason. (No air on etc). Result was wrecked head gaskets and warped heads. Repairs cost \$2200 and the

car still overheats. The initial cause has not been determined, and only a new radiator, heater core, water pump and thermostat will solve the problem, the dealer says. this will cost another \$2000 or so.

After 1/2 hour of freeway driving my car suddenly stopped running and wouldn't start. I noticed the battery and "check engine" light were on, and the temperature gauge was @ high. Tow truck driver suggested giving it a lot of gas and it started, but copious steam came out the back and it didn't run smooth. He checked under the hood and coolant was all over and puddling under the car. The auto repair shop said it was BHG, but also may need to replace engine, as they heard some knocks. The only "warning sign" I had in retrospect was that we needed to replace the coolant in the air conditioner a month ago, as it wasn't as cold as it used to be. I don't use the air conditioner much, and wasn't using it at the time the HGs blew. This is a dangerous problem - I had to pull over in a No Parking zone as this occurred on a freeway exit. I'm up for a class action suit.

Had external leak and was going to have the head gasket replaced but SOA had dealer add sealer instead. (1-12-04) I have had piston slap issues with car since new. At 39K miles SOA replaced #2,#4 pistons with updated pistons. Also had new updated head gaskets on both heads since engine was out of car.

Having owned seven Subarus I can fix just about any problem with them. The blown head gasket I have is the second worst problem to rebuilding the manual transmission! Sad to say this will be my last Subaru. Besides, my

	Oakland, CA	98 Legacy Outback	2.5L	72,000
	Wildwood New Jersey	MY02 outback wagon	2.5L	38k miles
	Morgantown, WV	99 Outback	Phase I 2.5L	95,000

wife just bought a brand new Toyota 4 runner for only a couple grand more (\$3K) than what she would have bought a new Subaru for.

Last Feb I discovered coolant leak on driver side. Dealer replace head gasket N/C. They also found the head "out of spec" and replace it N/C.

Well, after looking at all the other comments, I can see my problems are most likely head gasket related. No VOCs in the radiator yet, but I did have a few overheating incidents where fluid almost came out of the expansion tank, very frothy. I want to get rid of this car ASAP!! I want an 05 but am scared of what might happen down the road. I don't feel alone anymore :)

Just got word, as I suspected based on the symptoms, that the head gasket needs to be replaced at a cost of 2-3K. Just bought the car used a year ago. Anyone making progress on a legal front? Would love to hear about it.

blown head gasket i guess was hoping otherwise

Fine when it idles, when under driving load it blows coolant out the overflow. Then overheats.

I hope I can fix this one myself.

Overheating engine. Cylinder head gasket failed. Local dealer replaced for C\$1,200. On road test drive developed major vibration from engine -- piston rod bearing failed. Needs a new short block for another C\$4,000. May be the last Subaru I own!

Well maintained engine and running fine but hot one day. sludge in the radiator resevoir.

Scappoose, OR 2000 Legacy L Wagon 2.5L 96,000

ABQ, NM prior Seattle, WA 98 Outback 2.5L 99K

Carrboro, NC 99 Outback wagon 2.5L 85000

Australia 1998 liberty 2.3lt 189000

Deep River ON 1997 Legacy 2.5L 170000

Broken Arrow, Oklahoma 97 Legacy Outback Limited 2.5L 130,000

Vancouver, BC 98 Legacy Outback 2.5L 160,000 km (100,000 mi)

Ottawa, Canada 1998 Forrester, 2.5 130K

Probably just the temperature gauge, so down to the dealership. Nothing wrong with the temperature gauge but your head gasket is leaking. The repair estimate: \$ 2 to 3 thousand. Definitely my last subaru.

UPDATE FROM PREVIOUS POST. I performed all of the head gasket replacement work myself. Not a big deal with the engine left in the car. The gasket leak was enough to allow coolant to leak into the oil. One repair led to another that led to another. In other words I would find another problem everytime I had the engine rebuilt...all associated with the gasket leak. After \$750 I still had an internal bearing squeal in the engine block. Realizing that the coolant in the oil was probably the cause and I was screwed I went ahead and crossed my fingers and drove the car 10 miles. The bearing failed in service! I am going to buy a rebuilt engine from CCR, swallow my pride, and drop another \$2900. No more subarus for me!

 Morgantown, WV 1999 Legacy 2.5L Outback Wagon Phase I 95,000

Index

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