



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 100145

Date Received

22-SEP-2004

Repository

Reference No.
10084051

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name: [Redacted]
Address: [Redacted]
City: MCMURRAY State: PA Zip Code: [Redacted]

Daytime Telephone Number

E-mail Address

Evening Telephone Number

Do you authorize the manufacturer of your vehicle?
In the absence of your signature, the manufacturer's name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.
Signature of Owner: [Redacted]

YES NO
Date: 10/16/04

VEHICLE INFORMATION

17 digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side: JTHBA30G740 [Redacted]
Make: LEXUS Model: ES 330 Model Year: 2004

Date Purchased: 5-25-04 Dealer's Name and Telephone Number: LEXUS OF NORTH HILLS 724-940-1400
Original Owner: Dealer's City: 15025 PERRY HIGHWAY WILKESBORO, PA Zip Code: 15086
Engine: No. Cylinders: Fuel Type: Gas

Transmission Type: AUTOMATIC
 Antilock Brakes
 Cruise Control
Powertrain: [Redacted]
Vehicle Component Code: 1B1000 VEHICLE SPEED CONTROL-ACCELERATOR PEDAL
Multiple Failure: 1

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s): 02-Jul-2004
Failure Mileage: 1500
Failure Speed: 5 MPH

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Make: Tire Model (Name or Number): Tire Size (Example P215/85R15):
DOT No. (Example: DOTM18ABC036): 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: 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 a part is available).

WHEN APPLYING THE ACCELERATOR PEDAL VEHICLE HESITATED THEN SURGED FORWARD. CONSUMER WAS CONCERNED THAT HE WILL BE REAR ENDED. *AK

A well known problem that Lexus continues to ignore, thus subjecting drivers & occupants as well as general public to risk of injury or death.
See attached documentation & correspondence. They deny a problem despite hundreds of complaints - just drive my car!

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.

[REDACTED]
McMurray, Pa. [REDACTED]

October 13, 2004

Kevin Mullen, General Manager
Lexus of North Hills
15025 Perry Highway
Wexford, Pa. 15090

Dear Mr. Mullen,

Following is my complaint about a 2004 Lexus ES330 that I purchased for my wife, [REDACTED] earlier this year, from Lexus of North Hills, Wexford, Pa.

One particular day [REDACTED] was approaching a four lane highway where she had a yield sign. After almost coming to a stop, and at the proper point in time, she pressed on the accelerator in order to merge into the far right (slow) lane that was wide open.

As [REDACTED] was pulling out, a car in the left / outside (passing) lane turned into the right / inside lane from behind a truck in order to pass the truck on the inside. When [REDACTED] pressed on the accelerator, there was this feeling that her world just stopped, because nothing happened. Then her car lunged into the intended lane, only to have the car that just changed lanes come bearing down on her.... horn blowing, hands and fingers waving. This was a very dangerous situation that almost resulted in a serious injury to my wife and who knows how many other individuals. Impact was avoided by only inches.

My wife describes the moment when the car hesitated as the most helpless feeling of her life. What was only seconds seemed like an eternity. The car's hesitation, then lunging forward was totally unexpected and a situation that neither her, nor any other driver could possibly have expected or anticipated. I have since been forced into driving the Lexus more and more since my wife is no longer comfortable driving that car.

I am not well informed on the mechanics of today's automobiles. However, it has been explained to me that the new design that is causing the problem came when the ES330 model was changed from a five speed to a six speed transmission. In this conversion, the drive train went from a direct drive by cable to a system of commands that communicates between the gas pedal, the computer, the transmission, and the engine. Now, instead of the gas pedal being directly connected to a series of cables and rods and whatever, the gas pedal now communicates with a computer and the computer tells the transmission and engine what to do. **The communication time is the delay that we feel, instead of the gas pedal being directly connected to the engine as one single motion.**

The hesitation is similar to the feeling of a transmission slipping or some type of blockage in the fuel line. There is definitely a delay in the car accelerating in certain situations when you hit the gas. It is very unpredictable though. It is most common when you slow down to a very slow rate of speed, but not to a complete stop, then press on the accelerator. It is not as noticeable when you come to a complete stop for a period of time. I guess during that period, the system has time to gear down and the vehicle always pulls out in the same gear so it doesn't have to figure anything out. When you are just slowing down, the computer doesn't know if you are going to continue on, or stop. Then when you hit the gas, it gets caught between options. The hesitation is also there when you stop, then immediately pull out again. Once again, I guess that you need to sit there long enough for the computer to recognize the actual "stop". **My description may not be exactly the way that the system works, although it is very close, but the overall concept of communication time and the inherent delay of such a set up vs direct connection is 100% accurate. This condition is not my imagination, nor that of the many other Lexus owners that have, and continue to complain about this problem.**

It is unlikely that one could become aware of the problem in their normal test drive. The service department also told us that using a very high grade of gas may minimize the problem...something over 92 Octane. I wonder just how many Lexus sales representatives tell that one to their prospective customers? I might also mention that we do burn the highest grade of gas and it makes no difference what so ever. It's not the Octane, it's the computer delay that causes the hesitation and lunge. The higher octane and the added "pep", probably just accentuates the resulting "lunge".

I have also noticed the hesitation, in certain situations, when you press on the

gas to hit passing gear...another very dangerous time for the car to become confused and for the driver to not know whether the car is going to respond when you expect it to. Is this what Lexus expects us to believe is the result of their "Pursuit of Perfection" ??? These people need a new dictionary because the page in their dictionary with the definition of "Perfection" must be missing. I don't see much "Pursuit for Perfection" with this problem. Talk is cheap... "Performance" and "Perfection" cost money and that is where things start to change at Lexus. Their slogan should be more like "Run From Responsibility".

All car manufacturers are careful to address many operating and safety issues on the owner's manual. They want you to believe that they are trying to help you avoid any possible situation where you could be injured. In my Lexus ES330 owner's manual, they talk about driving in the snow and how to apply the brakes. Other issues that they warn / caution me about, include...

- * How we can be injured by the power windows.
- * That getting our fingers caught between the wipers and the window could cause injury.
- * That we could be injured by the heated seats.
- * We can reduce the chance of injury by keeping the glove box closed.
- * We can reduce the chance of injury by keeping the cup holder closed.
- * They remind us that we should be sure that the hood is securely locked since it could open unexpectedly and an accident may occur.
- * They warn us never to sit on top of the roof around the roof opening.

But they make no mention.... that under certain circumstances, while traveling at low speeds, your vehicle may hesitate then, after pushing on the accelerator, lunge forward in a manner that may surprise you and cause you to lose control of your vehicle, or causing you to be rear-ended by another vehicle, thus possibly causing injury to the occupants of the vehicle, other vehicles and pedestrians.

Why no mention ??? Because those other cautions, while they are elementary and could be handled by mere common sense, are basic to most vehicles and the hesitation and lunging is Lexus ES330 specific, and to tell the public about it, will not sell cars... and here is where the Lexus deception takes place. If Lexus was really concerned about the welfare of their customers, I think their priorities on what I really need to know about the Lexus ES330 would be different.

Over a very short time I became increasingly aware that we owned a seriously

flawed vehicle. First, someone in my neighborhood explained how disappointed he was with their new Lexus and how uncomfortable they were driving this strangely different vehicle. They returned the vehicle to their dealer time and time again, with the same report and outcome "this vehicle is operating as designed". Lexus never admitted that there was anything unusual about this car. Out of frustration, and at a financial loss, they sold the car. My wife and I are retired and we probably can't afford to do that and I will have to settle for working out my frustration by writing hundreds of letters and just as many telephone calls.

We decided to search the Internet under a few of the car rating sites. To say the least, we were overwhelmed by the volume of complaints about this same problem by other Lexus owners. These owners are receiving a programmed and orchestrated response to their complaints. The Lexus national policy is to only state that the vehicle is operating as designed. The pattern is unmistakable from dealer to dealer and state to state, with the same wording and statements. Talk about programming and conditioning employees!! If Lexus would spend as much time and effort trying to remedy the problem, and it is a problem, as they do on trying to mask over the issue and doing related damage control, this issue would be history by now. I am outraged that a car manufacturer can receive so many complaints about the same problem and it continues to be swept under the rug. I can see and understand the selfish and self-serving position that Lexus is taking because of the financial consequences of admitting to, and correcting the problem. What I am shocked at is why the automobile magazines that rate and review cars for the consumers have not yet picked up on this, although this is a relatively new problem. None the less, the problem is there to see on the Internet. One guy claims to have won a lemon law action against Lexus.

I am stuck with this car because of my lease. If I had known about this condition, I would have never leased the car, I would have even gone for another model. If I had purchased the car, I could have at least considered selling it, just to get away from it. So now, I will commit as much time as I can to make sure that every automobile publication becomes aware of this problem over and over again and try to see that potential Lexus buyers become more informed than I was before I purchased this car. I have already filed a complaint with three governmental agencies, the arbitration company that Lexus directed me to as well as twenty-six letters to various publications and other entities that I believe should be aware of this problem. I also just completed two online owner's surveys provided by two car magazines. I personally go out of my way to discourage everyone from considering the purchase of a Lexus.

The biggest mistake I made was to enter into a four year lease that has me locked in for four long years. I have never asked to be released from my lease, only that Lexus fix this widely recognized problem and get over their denial. This was probably a mistake, I have now lost all respect for this company and would now choose to distance myself from if I ever had the opportunity. This four year relationship will not be good for Lexus. I am proud to say that I know of two individuals that did not pursue the purchase of a Lexus ES330 because of my problem and their test ride in my car. Not that I needed it, but those two decisions confirmed my own convictions. I just wish I knew how many more people those individuals have told this story to. We probably spend one-half of our time in Wexford because of my in-laws, that is why we came to North Hills Lexus. One of my in-law's neighbors, in Wexford, has a 2001 Lexus and based on our conversations, I don't believe that their new car in January will be a Lexus. I really think it's great to be able to spend so much of my time with so many of your neighbors.

The Lexus dealer's employees acknowledge the condition and the many complaints about this exact problem. I have had my car to the Lexus service department several times on the problem. They completely understand the problem and have described the change Lexus made in the vehicle that has caused this problem. North Hills Lexus has pretty much told us that that is how the car was designed and there is no fix so we should just learn to live with the vehicle and the condition will become less noticeable as we become more accustomed to the vehicle. That may happen if that is the only car we drive, but does that make it any safer to drive? I believe that Lexus has an unsafe design problem and in the Legal field, they call this a Product Liability problem. Lexus should not be permitted to design and sell an unsafe product and then turn their back on the public after they have exposed us to potential serious injury with possible fatal consequences. If the vehicle cannot be fixed, it should be recalled.

This problem is starting to become more widely recognized and sooner or later it is going to hurt Lexus. I, as well as several other Lexus owners that I know, cannot wait to get our hands on our next Consumer Report and J D Power survey. I believe that this is an unsafe vehicle to both drive and / or occupy as a passenger. There is no question in my mind that this vehicle must be driven with a totally different mindset than any other vehicle that I have ever driven. I believe that I must have a more significant opening between cars before I can pull out into traffic or change lanes to pass another vehicle. Driving this vehicle is not a natural thing

especially when you drive another vehicle. It is impossible to go through a sequence of steps and a mental checklist every time you stop, slow down or attempt to pass another vehicle while at the same time, focusing on traffic, weather and pedestrian factors.

Lexus has many corporate responses that they weave among technical explanations. They talk about an "adaptive transmission" that adjusts to the driver over a five thousand mile period and "could" reduce the hesitation.

First of all, our car has over four thousand miles on it and we have not experienced any improvement. Secondly, we surmise that even if you only had one driver, and such an adjustment was possible, pity the occasional driver that may drive this car and how do we prepare that person for what they are about to experience. I guess you only loan this vehicle to your enemies. Thirdly, if my wife and I split the driving 50/50, which one of us will the transmission adjust to??? I have never received an answer to that question.

I do not yet fully understand all of the sources that I will have to contact over and over again for the next few years. I am committed to bringing this ruthless, arrogant, selfish and unconscionable corporation into the light of the American car buying public. I expect to write hundreds of letters with telephone follow-up to every local, state and federal governmental agency, consumer publication, newspaper, car reviewers, car rating service / publications, and hopefully some of the local media, to be sure that the public is as informed as they should be prior to purchasing a Lexus. I believe that everyone should be aware of the tremendous number of complaints that exist against this vehicle. I am committed to having as many personal conversations with as many individuals as I can and I will need people to ride with me or even drive my car. The public must become more aware of the web sites that they can review and the failure of Lexus to address the problem. I also believe that we Lexus owners, must, probably through the Internet and in every other way possible, find a way to rate this car and manufacturer as low as possible. We must make sure that all car reviewers become aware of the magnitude of the problem. Unfortunately, Lexus does have other models that do not have this design problem, are truly quality vehicles and this has provided them with a certain amount of credibility that Lexus is riding on at this point in time. Hopefully, the problems with the ES330 model will someday hurt their reputation on those other models...that is a given.

I am a reasonable and rationale individual that has never before undertaken such a cause or actions against anyone. I don't even remember writing a letter of complaint to anyone before today. This issue, however, carries a financial impact that cannot be casually discarded without financial consequences that we will not absorb. Then, there is the danger to me and that of my family and the potential injuries that are being looked at by Lexus as just a meaningless and irrelevant part of doing business in today's society. That attitude compels me to take such an outspoken position for the first time in my life. I am now retired and will have ample time to continue to research, publicize and pursue this issue at a pace and level that I am sure would surprise the folks a Lexus. I believe reading my letters is only part of an effective strategy. I believe that I must have personal conversations and I need people to ride with me or even drive this car.

Thank you for taking the time to read this lengthily summary of my position and plans to communicate my dissatisfaction to anyone that will listen. I will continue to solicit any suggestions on how I can expand on the number of sources that might be in a position to assist in educating and informing the general public, although my list is already significant. Also, I will continue to seek out other Lexus owners in order to discuss and inform them of this problem.

Lexus has their corporate policy that they will continue to operate under. I know, even from employee remarks off the record, that this is a recognized problem but on a local level they are powerless to do anything about it. That adds to my frustration since I know that I do not have anyone available to me that has the authority to effectively address the problem or has the desire to even try to rock the corporate ship. I'm just one customer and not a major loss to North Hills Lexus. I have also purchased three new Cadillacs from Rohrich Cadillac over the last four years, along with a constant maintenance relationship....and never a single complaint over many, many years. That thirty year relationship is now history too...again a pebble in a pond.

I don't really expect to benefit from all of my efforts. I have the time and energy to pursue this cause, already knowing that I have saved three unsuspecting parties from experiencing my frustration. I'm sure our paths will cross over this matter. I just wanted to make sure that you had a complete understanding of my position and feelings.

Finally, I am enclosing about twenty pages from Edmunds web site. I could

have printed over a hundred pages for you, if I thought it would make a difference. Also, you can review case after case, complaint after complaint on the National Highway Safety Administration web site on the same ES330 hesitation issue, or go to the Lexusownersclub.com site and find all of the complaints about the ES330 hesitation problems, as well as other sites.

NOW, after reading so many of the complaints, just by the numbers alone, and then the Lexus denials, does this sound like an honest and responsible company that is "Pursuing Perfection" or one that is at all concerned about customer safety or customer satisfaction? Can you even remotely understand our position and why we might have a legitimate concern and complaint? This is not a case of our imagination running wild. I never dreamed that after leasing a car from Lexus it could turn out to be a case of "Buyer Beware" where it would be up to me to find design problems prior to closing the deal because of your "you bought it, now you live with it" attitude on such a widely recognized problem. The next thing I'll hear is that this is all a conspiracy that is being perpetrated by Acura and Infiniti sales representatives.

Sincerely,



CC: Mark Cohen, Sales Manger
Juan DeLaVega, Sales Consultant
Tom Gapsky, Service Manager



Lexus ES 300
Product

"WOW" Lexus
ES300 ES 300
"PerfOrMAnZe
Max/Chip" +HP
Price **\$6.50**

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GS LS 300 330
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LEXUS BK "
SEATBELT PADS IS
RX ES GS LS 300
330
Price **\$9.99**

LEXUS BK Neck
Pillows IS ES SC GS
RX 300 330
Price **\$9.99**

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replace before he starts. There are thousands of parts in a modern auto and quite a few of them could cause a rattle. What's the dealer supposed to do - start changing parts? Or maybe replace every single part in the car that could possibly cause a rattle? No, those options are acceptable, obviously.

#588 of 594 by Mr_ShiftRight HOST [redacted] Oct 07, 2004 (4:40 pm)

The dealer gets, I believe, some token amount for "rattles", some minimum time. He really sends two people out in your car, one to drive, one to listen, for very long and losing money.

So you see the customer and the factory sort of play "bookends" on the dealer and I hope both sides as best he can.

Don't presume the relationship between dealer and factory is all warm and cuddly. They are often at war, sometimes at peace.

I think everybody involved wants someone else to be holding the bag, is what it boils down to.

#589 of 594 Dismal Picture by gottis [redacted] Oct 08, 2004 (1:54 pm)

I've been following this forum for several weeks now deciding on whether or not to buy a 2005 ES330. I do believe that the reported rattles and transmission hesitation are real, but does this affect the majority of the cars, or just a few? I understand that rattles and noise, however a transmission safety problem is a real concern. So, are there people there who have the ES330 WITHOUT these problems? I sure would like to know before I buy this car at the top of my list. Thanks for your time.

#590 of 594 Re: Dismal Picture [gottis] by mexhonda99 [redacted] Oct 08, 2004 (2:00 pm)

You may want to ask the question in the regular ES300/ES330 forum also since most ES300/330 owners frequent those boards.

#591 of 594 Re: Dismal Picture [gottis] by pot1x Oct 08, 2004 (8:50 pm)



Why take a chance? If you get one with a transmission problem it's yours and yours you want to spend the time being under the Lemon law or going through arbitration or involved in an accident?

ps: The problem isn't always obvious in the test drive because of the adaptive learn feature, it can first occur after a couple thousand miles!

#592 of 594 Re: Dismal Picture by toydriver [redacted] Oct 08, 2004 (9:06 pm)



I've driven my 03 ES300 for 1 1/2 yrs now and have followed this website for the error. The first time I noticed hesitation and rough downshifting was after about 1,000 miles. The adaptive feature of the transmission can result in a difficult assessment for prospect. Everyone is different. Some think the tranny is dangerous, others don't seem to notice.

variation is difficult to explain, but many people think that the transmission performs consistent from car to car and that the real difference is in "how you drive". If you are someone who is very demanding of precision performance or if you have to driving a BMW or similar German-made car, you could be disappointed with the E. On the other hand, if you don't drive aggressively and are moving up to the Lexus b might be satisfied with the ES. I would suggest that you talk to as many owners and test drive the ES as much as y decide for yourself. I've owned Toyotas and earlier model Lexus vehicle and this ES with the 5sp tranny rougher and hesitates far more than my previous '95 Avalon and my wife's 01 RX300 Best of luck in your assessment.

#593 of 594 Re: ES330 was my worst car purchase in 15 years [ragosta1] by 10, 2004 (8:27 pm)

I am scheduled for es 330 arbitration at the end of Oct. 2005. How did your arb. Go advice? Have you seen Lexus Response to arb. manufacturers response form. The le , and they claim the car must be safe and reliable since I have driven 18,000 mfe car. Funny, I've been complaining about the acc. lag since week one, What was my to driving the car?

#594 of 594 Re: ES330 was my worst car purchase in 15 years [ragosta1] by 11, 2004 (2:33 am)

Sorry, My arbitration is scheduled for the end of the month. Any advice on how to de them. Thanks.

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Transmission problems with Lexus ES-300 ?

594 messages, Last post on Oct 11, 2004 at 2:33 AM
Created by [edmunds](#) in the [Maintenance & Repair Message Board](#).
Your Host is [mr_shiftright](#)

What is this discussion about? Lexus ES 300, Lexus ES 330, Sedan, Transmission

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#566 of 594 **2005 ES330 definitely has a transmission problem** by [tomharx](#) S
2004 (2:03 pm)



I test drove a fully loaded 2005 ES 330 and definitely noticed the transmission probl every stop sign, when I stepped on the gas, the car would hesitate for a couple of se before picking up.

I also test drove a 2005 camry xle v6 and noticed the same problem there as well. n toyota has already started giving \$500 cash back on the camry's in berey their first the new model year!

other than this, the es330 had a smooth and quiet ride with a luxurious feel. after th experience I was hoping to test drive the acura tl, but its interior was revolting, to sa we didn't even bother for a test drive on the acura.

It's amazing that inspite of this being a known issue for a long time, toyota/lexus has bothered to rectify it for the new model year.

#567 of 594 **Shuddering at high speed?** by [igiban](#) Sep 20, 2004 (4:58 pm)

Hesitation from low speed has been mentioned quite often, and that seems to bothe more than the others due to how aggressively one drives. Has anyone experienced at freeway speed (around 65 mph) on ES 02-7 Almost every driver drives in that mx daily basis.



Lexus ES 300
Product

"WOW" Lexus
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Max/Chip" +HP
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LEXUS B Neck
Pillows IS ES SC GS
RX 300 330
Price \$9.99

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T PADS IS RX ES
GS LS 300 330
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SEATBELT PADS IS
RX ES GS LS 300
330
Price \$9.99

LEXUS BK Neck
Pillows IS ES SC GS
RX 300 330
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#568 of 594 Re: ES330 was my worst car purchase in 15 years [ces] by ddm2
Sep 20, 2004 (10:15 pm)

I am not sure what you have been buying in the last 15 years ...I agree that there is with the transmission and the dealer has acknowledged the problem and tried to ins software patch to improve the situation. The problem hasn't gone completely but it's improvement - It's a 2003 ES300 - a little over a year old. However, I still find the car luxurious, comfortable, and the service at the dealership (Lexus of Greenwich in CT) The pros far outweigh any cons and I am writing this for the benefit of anyone who is considering buying this car. I truly believe that the problem isn't an issue for a safe driver and that even as I write this note Lexus is working hard to fix the problem.

#569 of 594 Re: ES330 was my worst car purchase in 15 years [ddm2] by jrag
Sep 21, 2004 (7:25 am)



As for safety - I was nearly rear-ended three times last week. There are times (partly busy cities) when stepping on the gas means you really need to go. When the car is twiddling its thumbs, you have a problem. And as for Lexus working hard to fix the problem what makes you think that? If they came out and said "we have a problem with the car we are working on a fix and will provide it as soon as possible", most people would be happy. Instead, they keep denying that there's a problem. I'm going through arbitration right now because they just plain won't admit that there's a problem. What makes you think they are actually planning to fix a problem that they deny exists?

#570 of 594 Re: ES330 was my worst car purchase in 15 years [jagostaf] by [redacted]
Sep 21, 2004 (2:58 pm)

It takes years to build a brand and Lexus will be foolish to ignore this issue - however they may appear to them. They may not classify it as a "problem" in a technical way but they are obviously aware of the issue and I am sure they are working to fix/improve it. I must admit that they have been aware of this issue/problem for the past 2 years and it must be something for them to take so much time to rectify it. I do think that you are in a unique situation... assuming that this wasn't happening to you in other cars that you have driven, your car must be really bad. I live in the metro NY area and believe it qualifies to be a "bad" car and yet have never experienced what seems to be happening to you - rear-end situations times per week! Good luck with the arbitration!

#571 of 594 ddm2.....just my opinion by georgeb7 [redacted] Sep 21, 2004 (7:2

You cannot place the same weight of value on a transmission as you do the amenities. Most people would agree that a transmission is far more important than dual climate control or leather seats. Obviously, if you get rear-ended because your transmission can't do what it's supposed to do, your dual climate control doesn't mean much. Safety always comes before aesthetics. If you take away the engine and transmission, you have nothing. The fact that the older transmissions were more responsive seems to indicate that the technology was there but it was not implemented properly this time. I personally would not spend \$35,000 on a transmission that does not run as good as one two or three years ago. Most people expect it to be better not worse. Recommending a car to someone when you know it has transmission problems is questionable at best.

#572 of 594 Re: ddm2.....just my opinion [georgeb7] by ddm2 [REDACTED] Sep 22, 2004 (10:36 pm)

The very fact that there has been no recall on the car despite the problem having pe over 2 years tells me that it isn't as much of a safety issue as is being made out on t message board. If it was really a safety issue, our friend would be considering suing rather than looking at arbitration! We may still get there some day but not just yet. I i your assessment about the importance of the transmission over luxury. As far as I k new technology and they need to debug the kinks in the software or replace the cur software with something new. Basically, the function that used to be done with hard now done with software and that's obviously not been successful. Perhaps they sho to the old technology in the 2001 and earlier models - not sure if that is an option. Tl reliability, quietness, and comfort of the ride, combined with the proven Lexus track great customer service make me still recommend it although I do respect your opin

#573 of 594 Re: ddm2.....just my opinion [ddm2] by jragosta1 Sep 22, 2004 (am)

You've reached a couple of pretty bizarre conclusions.



First, you conclude that there's no safety issue because someone is going for arbltn instead of suing. Did it ever occur to you to read your manual? You HAVE to go to a first. If you sue first, it will get thrown out of court. Not to mention that the evidentiary are greater if you sue - AND the cost.

Then you conclude that the car is safe because it hasn't yet been recalled. So the F Explorer was safe the day before NHTSA recalled it, but suddenly became unsafe tl after? The fact that NHTSA hasn't gotten around to it doesn't mean anything. They t for the higher volume vehicles first. Now, if you had some evidence that they had ln the matter and decided not to pursue it, you might have a point. But since that's not you're wrong.

I drive the car every day. There are many, many occasions where the long lag time accelerates creates an unsafe condition.

#574 of 594 RE:ddm2 by denny Sep 22, 2004 (6:22 pm)



I will certainly second jragosta's statement that the hesitation is a safety issue. I hav nearly hit on several occasions because of the hesitation problem. And keep in mind is one of many things this transmission and/or throttle response does poorly as has posted here often. The volume of comments on this board should convince folks the some real problems with the car and all Lexus does is say the car is operating as de

#575 of 594 by motownusa [REDACTED] Sep 22, 2004 (7:20 pm)


have any of you tried class action lawsuit?

#576 of 594 Re: [motownusa] by jragosta1 Sep 23, 2004 (7:41 am)

Not that I've heard of - but if someone starts one, I'll join.

#577 of 594 You be the judge. by pototx Sep 23, 2004 (10:39 pm)

Do Toyota and Lexus deliver the safety and customer satisfaction they claim?

 At Toyota and Lexus dealers, and the Edmunds Town Hall website, owners frequently complain of hesitation and surging in 2004 models (Camry, Highlander, Sienna, ES: RX330). Yet, Toyota claims there is no defect, and no safety problem with the transmission drive by wire throttle/software system—this is “normal” performance because all the

Based on the NHTSA database of 2004 owner reports:

- wow!
- There are 13 reports of accidents with property damage, personal injury and one related to the transmission/throttle system. (7 times the equivalent Ford and Honda rate).
 - Owners of V8 models (Sienna, ES330 and RX330) are 15 times more likely than Ford owners to file a hesitation/surging complaint—Could it be because a) they have problems b) Toyota refuses to acknowledge (or fix) the problem and c) it's NHTSA's in when a manufacturer won't voluntarily correct their safety defects?
 - The majority of V8 Toyota owners filing a hesitation/surging complaint state the cause (Of the significantly fewer transmission complaints from Ford and Honda owners, not reported it as a safety hazard!)

#579 of 594 Rattle in front seat-- by bill14 Oct 01, 2004 (7:27 am)

I have a 2004 Lexus ES 330 and have a rattle in the front passenger seat for month occurs at about 60 miles an hour. I have taken to the dealer 3 times and they can not hear the sound. Therefore, there is no attempt to fix it. Has anyone else had this problem fixed?

#580 of 594 Re: Rattle in front seat-- [bill14] by morehp [redacted] Oct 03, 2004 (8:00 am)

Does this rattle only occur when the seatbelt is unfastened? If so, ensure that it isn't seatbelt buckle rattling between the seat and the B-pillar.

I thought our ES330 had a seat rattle until I figured this out.

#581 of 594 Re: Rattle in front seat-- [bill14] by mitchb711 [redacted] Oct 04, 2004 (8:00 pm)

I too have a 2004 ES with an annoying rattle from either the front passenger seat or can't seem to figure out the source of the noise. I'm pretty sure that if I move the passenger seat all the way forward the noise disappears. I asked the dealer to look into it at the 5K check but they were unable to duplicate it.

Any help would be greatly appreciated.

#582 of 594 Re: Rattle in front seat-- [mitchb711] by bill14 Oct 05, 2004 (11:11 am)

Why does the dealer have to duplicate the sound before they try to fix it? I have exa same problem with the same dealer response.Why can't they take your word for it a to correct the problem? My dealer told me that it was a problem with all 2004 ES 33 they were waiting for a service bulletin from Lexus.

#583 of 594 Re: Rattle in front seat-- [bill14] by tmar1 [redacted] Oct 05, 2004 (12:1

"Why does the dealer have to duplicate the sound before they try to fix it? I have exa same problem with the same dealer response.Why can't they take your word for it a to correct the problem?"

Initially I thought you were kidding with this response, but I think you're serious. How dealer fix something that doesn't appear to be broken. If your problem can't be dupli what is he supposed to fix? Surely, you can't expect them to replace the whole seat appears fine. Let's say you have a leak in your roof, but it only leaks when the rain c one direction with high wind, but you don't know the direction. Before the rofer can there are several more storms, but no leaks. Unless the exact shingle can be found, expect a new roof? One has to find the source of a problem to fix it.



#584 of 594 Transmission arbitration by jagosta1 Oct 05, 2004 (1:42 pm)

I had my arbitration hearing today.

To start, they asked if I wanted to negotiate with Lexus to solve the problem. I agree left the room. All Lexus wanted to do was let me trade my car in on a different model the difference. That's not much of a resolution - since I can do that any time I want.

After all the preliminaries, I started with a description of the problem and documenti evidence (including NHTSA reports were 50% of all ES problems were related to th reports from this board, reports from edmunds.com, and a letter from Lexus admitit there was a transmission problem).

Lexus got to respond. They stated that there was no problem and it was simply a m driving style. They argued that the car was within specs.

I then asked them what the specification on transmission hesitation was. They adit there is no spec on this parameter. I asked how they determined that my car was w parameters if there's no spec. They said that they compare it to other cars of the se and make. I then said "so if every ES has the same problem, you will then say that i normal?". She refused to answer the question.

One of the arbitrators asked if there was any record of accidents caused by this pro wasn't aware of any, nor was Lexus.

We then did the test drive. The car hesitated right on cue. No question about that.

After coming back into the room, we each gave our closing statement. Lexus repeat was a 'shifting style' problem and not a real problem. I repeated that by Lexus definl 100% of the cars had their wheels fall of, it would not be considered a problem. In rt hundreds of complaints as well as the results of the test drive show that it was a rea

I'll know within 10 days. If I don't win this, then I'd say that there's little chance of ev

an arbitration hearing. The evidence was pretty clear.

I'll let everyone know how it turns out.

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#545 of 594 **Re: Is this a possible cause [rhpcpa]** by [jragosta1](#) Aug 23, 2004 (1

That's rather odd (having the problem on a 2001 GS).

You can check the frequency of these problems on [nhisa.dot.gov](#). For the 2002-04 1/2 or more of the cited problems are due to the hesitation problem. I don't remember numbers, but I think the total number of problems related to this issue is approaching the 3 years combined (out of roughly 200 total problems cited).

For the 2001 GS, there are only 7 complaints - and NONE are related to the hesitation. The same is true of more recent years.

I would suggest that you have the dealer look for another cause. If it were really due same problem as the ES problem, there would almost certainly be more complaints

#546 of 594 **2006's Still Have The Transmission Problem** by [browniebear](#) Aug (12:24 pm)

I test drove a 2005 ES 330 yesterday and I observed all the issues that people have talking about with the transmission. The salesman said that he "had never heard of issues". Sure!

#547 of 594 **Alternatives?** by [mnratner](#) Aug 31, 2004 (5:13 pm)

strokee for different folks.

I have to admit the luxury line is getting very exciting as manufacturers are starting t
the interior layout and amenities.

<http://www.autospies.com>

Do your homework

#551 of 594 Re: transmission problems - hardly [sharpwitz] by tpm] Sep 04, 2
(pm)

counted 20 transmission complaints on nhtsa web site, if all those es330's that lexus
have that big of a problem why not a major recall or class action suit. or at the very l
it fixed for the 2005 model year, something not adding up.

#552 of 594 Re: transmission problems - hardly [sharpwitz] by mrdlexus Sep
(3:29 pm)

I owned a 2004 es330, and it does have major problems. Yes that is past tense, I h
traded in the car! The transmission has rough shifting and the drive by wire throttle
delay in acceleration. These two components do not work well together, causing pot
safety issues. If you drive any other car there generally will be immediate accelerati
fairly smooth shifting, not in the lexus es330. My dealership(Lexus of Northborough)
admitted to many complaints from es owners and frankly they do not know if Lexus
the problem. Lexus is aware of the problem, but as long as people continue to buy
they will not fix it. I believe the quality of Lexus in general has gone down hill, cheap
cars to sell more to the average consumer. The initial quality of the es is comparable
Maxima or G35, not far exceeding expectations. I believe the entry level Lexus auto
are overpriced and the quality is less than I would expect from Lexus. Trust me I ow
es330 and was in shock how poorly I was treated by Lexus customer service. Once
purchased the car there was nothing I could do, except try to get rid of it. If Lexus oc
transmission and drive by wire throttle it would be an excellent car. I owned a 1999
overall it drove better than the Lexus, I made a huge mistake thinking Lexus was be
the average Toyota. I should have kept the Camry. I urge anyone considering the pr
the es330 to thoroughly test drive the car before you buy it, preferably two or three t
make sure you like it. Test the car against an Infiniti, Acura, or BMW and then tell m
no hesitation from the car!! Good luck to all with the hesitation problem. Continue to
dissatisfaction with Lexus on the NHTSA website.

#553 of 594 Re: transmission problems - hardly [mrdlexus] by tpm] Sep 05, 2
(pm)

Thanks mrdlexus, it's really hard to believe. acura ti here i come.

#554 of 594 Re: transmission problems - hardly [tpm] by sharpwitz [redacted] Sep
(2:52 am)

I'm sorry, but there must be a misunderstanding.

The transmission problems are with the 2004 LS 430 and not the 2004 ES330.

You need to look over the site again.

Also, 13,000 recalls for the LS 430 is a VERY small number compared to other car manufacturer has 1 million recalls)

I can't believe I'm defending Lexus when I don't plan on buying one. It's a great car, transmission is smooth. I test drove one just to see and was impressed. But I'm a yc who wants a car to have a "bling bling" appearance. Otherwise, I would go with Lex!

#555 of 584 Re: transmission problems - hardly [sharpwiz] by jagosta1 Sep 07, 2004 (8:44 am)

Sharpwiz:

Interestingly, you don't even seem to own one of the affected Lexus models, but you say that my statements are false.

Check NHTSA like you've suggested. But instead of looking at recalls, check for car complaints. You'll find over 100 complaints on the 02-04 ES300/330 models related to this problem. You don't get 100 complaints that are imaginary. Nearly 1/2 of ALL ES cars have to do with this particular problem. It's real.

You could also try:

<http://us.lexusownersclub.com/forums/index.php?showtopic=3584&>

The problem is that Lexus refuses to admit that there's a problem - so they haven't issued a recall. And until there are a significant number of accidents, the DOT won't make them. They don't make the problem any less real.

#556 of 584 [tpmj] - ES or LS? by jagosta1 Sep 07, 2004 (8:47 am)

Actually, the problem seems to happen on most of the current Lexus models. I know that the LS, ES, GS, and RX are affected.

Apparently, it's a combination of things. First, the drive-by-wire controller is stupid and doesn't respond in less than a second or two in some circumstances. Second, Lexus programs cars to move into higher gear as early as possible - which means more downshifting where the problem is most severe.

Perhaps that's the reason Lexus won't fix it. They can't simply recall one model - they'd have to recall nearly their entire product line. To make matters worse, they would apparently lose their ULEV status if they make the fix (based on the fact that they are able to fix the cars where there is no ULEV issue).

Bottom line is that Lexus knows there's a problem and is stonewalling for some reason.


#557 of 584 Re: 2005 es330 transmission [tpmj] by demoothe Sep 09, 2004 (10:12 am)

problem. There are only three things I can think of;

- 1) Denial - many people don't want to admit they made a bad purchase because it is too painful
- 2) Lexus name - they can't have a transmission problem - "It's a Lexus"
- 3) Mine works - therefore yours must

All illogical - and all display a lack of understanding the big picture about how vehicles are manufactured. (Every year cars are manufactured with major problems).

#560 of 594 Re: Resistance to transmission problems [georgeb7] by motownusa
Sep 09, 2004 (8:40 pm)

 If you read the carpoint.com review you will see that the transmission problem is not isolated to a handful of cars or does the 02+ ES300/330 have a fundamental flaw in the way the transmission was designed. Lexus does sell a lot of ES300/330 (around 25K a year); so the question despite the transmission flaw people are still buying this car and overall reviews have been pretty good. I guess the positive does outweigh the negative.

#561 of 594 Re: Resistance to transmission problem [motownusa] by sloows
Sep 13, 2004 (10:31 pm)

At the risk of beating a dead horse (I note that many of those who purchased an ES300/330 the same time I did do not post as much as they once did), I am convinced that the problem exists in all ES300s/330s.

I believe that the most likely reason for the varying reports is that the degree to which a driver perceives the same symptom varies.

I also suspect that varying driving styles result in different frequency and intensity of symptoms occurring.

I actually was a passenger in a vehicle (not an ES300) where the driver did not maintain a steady gas flow to the engine even while maintaining a constant speed. The driver kept backing off and depressing the accelerator to the point where I felt as though she was slowing down and speeding up ever so slightly. Such a driver would find the ES300 transmission a nightmare!

#562 of 594 It's more than a Lexus transmission issue. by eastoncarguy Sep 14, 2004 (4:34 pm)

This issue extends beyond the Lexus line of vehicles. It extends into the Toyota Camry and the 5 speed automatic.

I have a 2004 Sienna with the same engine/transmission config as the ES. The hesitation there too. Even my wife, who never has any complaints about acceleration says it is



I attended Lexus' Taste of Luxury event this weekend, and let me tell you the hesitation is painfully obvious when you move from one car back to the ES or RX. You can floor it for 1-2 seconds for it to respond. Try flooring the BMW 330 or 530 or the Infiniti G and see what happens.

Overall Lexus/Toyota build great cars but the new trans needs help.

#563 of 594 Re: mrdlexus [davidz] by oca Sep 10, 2004 (3:12 pm)



The ES330 transmission "learns" your driving pattern. If you are an aggressive driver regret your decision to purchase this vehicle. The transmission problems are real as corporate doesn't care. The drive by wire lag is not the major problem, it is the inability of the car to decide what gear it needs to be in that is really annoying.

#564 of 594 ES330 was my worst car purchase in 18 years by oca Sep 10, 2004 (2:20 pm)



The transmission problems are very real. The drive by wire lag is not the biggest issue. The main issue is the transmission cannot decide what gear to shift into and hesitates. In the drive by wire lag, but the hesitation the car has while the transmission decides what gear to use is an engineering defect. The only thing worse than the defect is the Lexus "test and see" approach to the problem. The 2004 ES330 that I have is my first and last Lexus.

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#525 of 594 [mrdlexus](#) by [denny](#) Jul 26, 2004 (11:29 pm)

Could you tell us how the new GS is equipped and what the net cash difference was including title and taxes.

#526 of 594 [is there the same problem on manual transmission?](#) by [wypc](#) Jul (12:48 am)

I'm interested in ES300/ES330, but not sure whether they have the model with man transmission. I read part of the comments here and feel astonished. So anybody kn whether the same transmission problem exists on manual ES300/ES330? Thanks!

#527 of 594 [Re: mrdlexus \[denny\]](#) by [mrdlexus](#) Jul 27, 2004 (8:40 am)

The GS is not set up the same as the ES. Rear wheel drive, less wood on the dash, changer in the glove box. I wanted the HID lights that are in my ES, but that is stuff w/navigation only and cannot find one near the Boston area. Inventory is low 2-3 pe thats it. I bought my ES MSRP \$35,174 for \$31560(non navigation). The GS MSRP for \$36,794(non navigation). Trade in \$28,000, That has 6,600 miles and is in brand condition, you can't tell the difference between my car and one that is actually new!(the miles). Basically I am paying \$5,234 more for the GS than the ES. If you wait the being redesigned for 2006, and should be out in late 2005. Good luck!



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#528 of 594 Re: Is there the same problem on manual transmission? [wypc] t
maxhonda99 Jul 27, 2004 (7:30 am)

The last time the ES300 was available with a manual was for the 1994 model year.
no manual transmission.

#529 of 594 Re: Is there the same problem on manual transmission? (maxho
wypc Jul 27, 2004 (10:55 am)

That's really bad :(
Anyway, thanks a lot!

#530 of 594 Re: My ES330 and the RX330 [miamimike] by myes330transpr Ju
(10:27 pm)

Add me to your list of complaints. My husband and I have bought our 3rd Lexus and
a ES330, which we now have 1500 miles on. We have taken this beautiful car back
dealer three times for transmission problems described in post one on this board. I
described to my husband that I feel like a deer in the headlight of on-coming cars as
experience the same shifting problems. Fremont Magnusen's Lexus (Calif.) has had
for four days now, as their top mechanic is taking it home with him in an attempt to
our complaints of hesitation and shifting issues. We called him yesterday to learn he
car was doing good with no problems. We were upset to hear this as we spent big n
this car and wanted some type of fix. Frustrated, we checked the web and found thi
post. We were relieved to find we were not alone or crazy. We will keep you posted
like info on any progress or fixes.

Info we found from Toyota #TC005-03 "Technical Service Information Bulletin" (not
public) This addresses ATM shifting issues with the 2004 Rx330. So Lexus obvious
something's not right.



#531 of 594 04 Lexus ES330 Transmission Shift Problem by shopper777 Aug
(10:13 pm)

Just a question. Have you looked under your hood? I did. And found the upper vacu
that goes into the engine air filter compartment was disconnected. I promptly went to
Dealership and verified that the Camry SE (has same engine) has the vacume hose
connected. I promptly connected the hose and no hesitation any more. The accelera
car improved noticeably. However, it does suck regular unleaded like it's going out c
(even driving on cruise control). This hose is located on a T connector and connecte
upper left hand side of the upper part of the engine air filter container (when you are
car from the outside). Hope this helps.

#532 of 594 Re: 04 Lexus ES330 Transmission Shift Problem [shopper777] by
myes330transpr Aug 03, 2004 (12:05 am)

I will print out this post so to try the hose check under the hood thing when I pick up

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Go[1](#) ... [24](#) [25](#) [26](#) [27](#) [28](#) [29](#) [30](#) [Recent Msgs](#)[#514](#) of 594 [My ES330 and the RX330](#) by [miamimike](#) Jul 13, 2004 (9:25 am)

I have had my ES330 since September 2003 and have driven it 12,000+ miles. I am buff, I just wanted a safe, reliable, luxury car that drove nicely. When I go to pull out or pass another car, my ES330 hesitates. I am not being picky but I find that this is dangerous because cars are coming at me and I am just sitting there staring at them like a deer waiting to be killed. Luckily I haven't been stuffed and mounted yet ;-). I am being overly sensitive but I would NOT recommend the ES330 until Lexus admits the problem and fixes it. I have had three regular maintenance trips. All three times the different dealers) have said that they are unaware of the problem. HELLO, read Edmunds.com! And, from the postings here, it appears that this was also a problem ES300. Nice customer service Lexus; are you reading this? Do you care?

I have been on two long trips and enjoy the car otherwise. I find that the gas mileage

I am not in favor of purchasing another Lexus but my wife is really interested in the I Question: Has anyone found the same problem with the RX? Thanks in advance for

[#515](#) of 594 [RX 330](#) by [jragosta1](#) Jul 13, 2004 (11:54 am)

I've heard of rare complaints on the RX330, but they're apparently far less common the ES330. I don't know if the difference is due to user issues or if there's a real diff the vehicles.



Lexus ES 300
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Your best bet is to drive one to find out.

Personally, I liked the RX330, as well, but decided to go for luxury rather than utility, so sure this was the right decision.

#516 of 504 Re: My ES330 and the RX330 [miamimita] by tiban Jul 13, (5:44 pm)

You got to test drive or test pass to find out. I had an RX330 for loaner once and cor ES it's not as quiet and smooth.

I have a 03 ES300 and most of the time I simply need to press pedal half way to per merge. 210 HP isn't much these days but it seems to be enough for all practical pur typical judgement I use is that if I have to floor the throttle in order to pass a car, or the other car's driver is aggressive, then I would just let the other car go first. I am n aggressive driver to begin with so it's never an adjustment for me. I'd not have boug spirited driving to begin with, although I am not saying whatever hesitation behavior one. It just never bothers me in real world driving.

#517 of 504 Lexus ES-330 trans problems by jerry5 Jul 19, 2004 (5:57 pm)

I had planned to purchase a ES-330 in about six months but after reading some of t transmission experiences of owners, I am hesitant to spend over 30K to experience problems for myself.

Is there any info coming from Lexus/Toyota that a fix may be forthcoming?
I have considered the Acura TL, but don't need the performance, and feel Lexus will better.

#518 of 504 Fix for transmission? by jagosta1 Jul 22, 2004 (7:43 am)

I've seen at least one report saying that Lexus claims that they'll have a fix this suny Frankly, I don't believe it for 2 reasons.

1. They claimed that the ES330 didn't have the problem. I specifically asked the des problem was fixed before I bought my car and he said it was. He was wrong.
2. I've been trying to get resolution from Lexus Customer 'Satisfaction' for a few moe their only response is 'it's normal'. If they were close to having a fix, I would expect t someone would say 'we have identified the problem and expect to have a solution s Please be patient'.

I don't think they're going to have a solution any time soon. I'm almost certainly hear arbitration.

#519 of 504 Transmission problems - please read... by jagosta1 Jul 22, 2004 am)

I filed for arbitration today. We'll see what happens.

One of the things I plan to do is bring in all the complaints to NHTSA to show that L

It's a problem. For the 2004 model year, 11 of the 38 complaints on the RX330 are for the same issue. 22 of the 28 complaints on the ES330 are the same problem. I haven't the percentages for previous years.



Clearly, the more people who document their complaints, the better the chance that fix the problem. So, again, I would encourage everyone who experiences the problem to file a complaint at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/>.

I'll keep everyone posted.

#520 of 594 JerryB by denny Jul 22, 2004 (5:08 pm)



I spoke with Lexus HQ about 3 or 4 weeks ago and it was clear that they are still in the process of testing changes to the transmission on the ES330. They said that if changes to the trans software are made that current owners will be notified. I would recommend that anyone considering this car should look elsewhere. As long as the ES330 remains strong Lexus will not fix this problem. I will take jagosta's advice and file a complaint with the nhtsa since some of the things that the 330 trans does badly are safety hazards (hesitation and lurching). I've owned enough new cars to know that the way the 330 operates is not normal, especially a brand that places itself in the luxury segment.

#521 of 594 Just curious by motownusa Jul 22, 2004 (7:16 pm)

<http://autos.msn.com/research/MyJob.aspx?modelid=11036&src=----v>

I just wish more attention had been put into how the transmission and engine work together in the test car.

Lexus said it "revised" the old tranny to better handle the new power. And for that they had "new grade logic" for the transmission to perform better on descents and on hilly roads.

But in the test car, occasional, clumsy-feeling upshifts came through to pass. There were enough of them during my test drive that I wondered what had happened to the silky-smooth shifts that I had so enjoyed from the predecessor ES. I also noticed occasional hesitation, as if the transmission was indecisive about which gear when I traveled on hilly highways.

This is a review from my carpoint. Notice the part about the transmission. The reviewer clearly felt the jerky transmission shift and the hesitation. Just wondering if this is what owners are feeling? Incidentally, I have also surfed the Avalon forum. Nothing but satisfied owners. Makes you wonder how two very similar cars made by the same company can have such different ownership experience.

#522 of 594 Re: ES 330 vs. Avalon shifting by toydriver Jul 22, 2004 (11:00 am)

Motownusa:

The 2004 Avalon has the "old" 4 speed auto transmission that was in the 2001 and 2002 models. The 2002-2004 ES 300/330 models have the 5speed auto with (drive by wire) electronics - which is the transmission of contention in this website. The 4 speed was "smooth" and had satisfied (happy) owners.

Edmunds is predicting that the new 2005 Avalon will have the 5speed transmission when it hits the showroom.

It will be interesting to see if a new "transmission problem" website will be started by for the Avalon later this year!

#523 of 594 Other models by jragosta1 Jul 23, 2004 (7:53 am)



It's pretty easy to see which models have this problem. Go to the NHTSA site above for models you want to compare. For example, the 2002 ES300, 2003 ES300, 2004 and 2004 RX330 all have between 30% and 50% of their complaints related to this. The 2004 Camry has less than 10% of its complaints related to the transmission in and none of these appear to be our hesitation problem (they're mostly self-acceleration reports). Interestingly, the 2004 Avalon only has 2 complaints (vs 29 for the 2004 ES) neither of them is related to this problem. The Avalon's a nice car - not quite as nice but at least its transmission works.

#524 of 594 New Car by mrdlexus Jul 25, 2004 (8:04 pm)



I have just traded my 2004 ES330 with 6500 miles for a new 2004 GS300. I am sick of the transmission, and the lack of desire to fix the problem. Where is the relentless perfection? I would not have purchased another Lexus, except for the fact that I am below invoice on the new car. The GS is silky smooth, just as the ES should have been. I would not purchase another ES until they fix the problem (if ever). As far as Lexus customer service is concerned they told me that it was operating as designed, and there was more they could do. They did an investigation into my problem and they found it to be So I was left an unhappy customer with little or no solution to the problem. I had 2 cl arbitration, or trade it in for something else. I feel bad for so many ES owners out there because Lexus simply does not give a sh**. Good luck to all you ES owners out there potential buyers stay clear of this car, or you will regret it just like the rest of us.

#525 of 594 mrdlexus by denny Jul 26, 2004 (11:29 pm)

Could you tell us how the new GS is equipped and what the net cash difference was including title and taxes.

#526 of 594 Is there the same problems on manual transmission? by wyc Jul (12:48 am)

I'm interested in ES300/ES330, but not sure whether they have the model with manual transmission. I read part of the comments here and feel astonished. So anybody know whether the same transmission problem exists on manual ES300/ES330? Thanks!



#527 of 594 Re: mrdlexus [denny] by mrdlexus Jul 27, 2004 (8:49 am)

The GS is not set up the same as the ES. Rear wheel drive, less wood on the dash, changer in the glove box. I wanted the HID lights that are in my ES, but that is stuff w/navigation only and cannot find one near the Boston area. Inventory is low 2-3 people that I bought my ES MSRP \$35,174 for \$31560(non navigation). The GS MSRP

for \$36,794(non navigation). Trade in \$26,000, That has 6,800 miles and is in brand condition, you can't tell the difference between my car and one that is actually new(the miles). Basically I am paying \$5,234 more for the GS than the ES. If you wait the being redesigned for 2006, and should be out in late 2005. Good luck!

#528 of 594 Re: Is there the same problem on manual transmission? [wypc] | maxhonda99 Jul 27, 2004 (7:30 am)

The last time the ES300 was available with a manual was for the 1994 model year. no manual transmission.

#529 of 594 Re: Is there the same problem on manual transmission? [maxho] | wypc Jul 27, 2004 (10:55 am)

That's really bad :(
Anyway, thanks a lot!

#530 of 594 Re: My ES330 and the RX330 [miamimike] | myes330transpr Jul 27, 2004 (10:27 pm)



Add me to your list of complaints. My husband and I have bought our 3rd Lexus and a ES330, which we now have 1500 miles on. We have taken this beautiful car back dealer three times for transmission problems described in post one on this board. I described to my husband that I feel like a deer in the headlights of on-coming cars or experience the same shifting problems. Fremont Magnusson's Lexus (Calif.) has her for four days now, as their top mechanic is taking it home with him in an attempt to solve our complaints of hesitation and shifting issues. We called him yesterday to learn he said our car was doing good with no problems. We were upset to hear this as we spent big on this car and wanted some type of fix. Frustrated, we checked the web and found this post. We were relieved to find we were not alone or crazy. We will keep you posted like info on any progress or fixes.

Info we found from Toyota #TC005-03 "Technical Service Information Bulletin" (not public) This addresses ATM shifting issues with the 2004 Rx330. So Lexus obviously something's not right.

fremontrobocop@yahoo.com

#531 of 594 04 Lexus ES330 Transmission Shift Problem by shopper777 Aug 1, 2004 (10:13 pm)

Just a question. Have you looked under your hood? I did. And found the upper vacu that goes into the engine air filter compartment was disconnected. I promptly went to Dealership and verified that the Camry SE (has same engine) has the vacume hose connected. I promptly connected the hose and no hesitation any more. The accelert car improved noticeably. However, it does suck regular unleaded like it's going out (even driving on cruise control). This hose is located on a T connector and connects upper left hand side of the upper part of the engine air filter container (when you are car from the outside). Hope this helps.

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Go[1](#) ... [23](#) [24](#) [25](#) [26](#) [27](#) [28](#) [29](#) [30](#) [Recent Msgs](#)#501 of 594 Would I buy it again? by [denny](#) Jun 27, 2004 (8:40 pm)

My 2004 ES330 transmission is getting worse as time goes on. In an earlier post I c about how sluggish the transmission was. Now, with 1,400 miles, it also jerks, balks hesitates, and shudders. Most of these occur when slowing down for a stop or turn corner, but not exclusively. Some occur at highway speeds also when you decelerate momentarily. The dealer checked the transmission control computer and says the c operating as designed. I called Lexus HQ and all they did was call the dealer and to car is operating as designed. Given Lexus' indifference and refusal to acknowledge a major problem with their transmission, my answer is a resounding NO. This is my last Lexus.

#502 of 594 1992 ES 300 by [bgrahe](#) Jul 01, 2004 (5:07 am)

I have been driving my father in laws car for a about a month now and I don't think t working. Can anyone tell me what they show on there tach when the car is running have called dealers, but they just say bring it in. I want some background info first. T

#503 of 594 Re: 1992 ES 300 [bgrahe #502] by [maxhonda99](#) Jul 01, 2004 am)

at 75MPH I would think your engine should be turning at about 3500RPM in 4th gea O/D isn't working, you should be seeing your engine turn at speeds in excess of