

10106913
November 15, 2004

Dear Sir:

2004 DEC -3 PM 4:07

I am writing to request your help in addressing a serious safety problem with my 2000 Eclipse GT. If left unresolved this problem could effect other Mitsubishi cars in addition to mine, leaving myself and other motorists open to serious injury or death and Mitsubishi subject to resulting liability.

The problem is with the cruise control system. While driving recently with the cruise control "on" it malfunctioned and was unable to be disengaged by any of the normal means. Attempts to cancel or turn off the cruise control did not work, nor did depressing the brake pedal or the clutch pedal. In fact, the brakes "froze" so that the brake pedal could not be depressed at all, essentially disabling the brakes and preventing my Eclipse from being stopped by normal braking.

This situation arose unexpectedly while driving at freeway speeds on US 101 here in California. As traffic became heavier I attempted to disengage the cruise control but quickly realized that it was malfunctioning and not able to be disengaged. The flow of traffic required decelerating in order to avoid collisions with other motorists. Due to the cruise control malfunction I was forced to veer into the median strip of the freeway and, with the help of my passenger, was able to stop my car by applying the emergency brake. We were very fortunate to maintain adequate control of the car while skidding along the gravel median strip at high speed. It is certainly an experience I never hope to repeat.

Upon returning home I immediately took my Eclipse to the local Mitsubishi dealership, Stevens Creek Mitsubishi, for diagnosis and repair. Unfortunately the Service Manager, Sal, was unconcerned and indifferent toward what I regard as a serious defect affecting safe operation of the car. Combined with his rudeness I decided to take the car to a private mechanic to be checked. Unfortunately, that check up did not find the source of the problem safety, so I have not used the cruise control since then fearing a recurrence of the cruise control lock-up.

It appears similar situations have arisen to other motorists as evidenced by the attached article. This has reinforced the urgency to bring this to Mitsubishi's attention so that the source of the problem can be identified and fixed. Until then the likelihood exists for similar malfunctions to endanger the safety of Mitsubishi owners and other motorists.

Your attention to this matter is urgently requested. Please contact me to advise me of the appropriate follow-up so this potentially deadly defect can be resolved.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Mountain View, CA
[REDACTED]

Jessica
12/17/04

Driver of runaway car makes panic call

Cell phone may have saved man's life after cruise control malfunctions

REUTERS Ⓢ

Updated: 1:59 p.m. ET Oct. 5, 2004

PARIS - A mobile phone call may have saved the life of a panic-stricken French driver who found himself hurtling down a motorway at 200 kph (125 mph) but unable to slow down because of a mystery fault with his luxury saloon car.

The driver called police to say the cruise control of his Renault Vel Satis had jammed while overtaking a lorry, and that all attempts to brake or put the automatic into neutral had failed, police said on Tuesday.

The driver became increasingly sure he was about to die as his top-of-the-range model raced towards a toll station on the A71 motorway between Bourges and Clermont-Ferrand, the police officer who took the call on Sunday said.

"He was panicking. He was doing between 180 kph and 200 kph all the time. He was doing 140 kph and then the car just accelerated away on its own," officer Patrick Majerus said.

The driver, [REDACTED] veered left and right to avoid traffic and even switched at times to the hard shoulder reserved for rescue vehicles, in order to avoid vehicles in his path.

"He thought he was finished. I'm not surprised he was scared -- it's not easy to go through a toll station at 200 kph, the gap is pretty tight," Majerus said.

Police attempting to escort him along the motorway found they were quickly overtaken. Dequiedt eventually managed to cut the engine and came to a halt around 20 km (12 miles) from the toll station, which had been evacuated as a precaution.

Renault boss Louis Schweitzer said he was mystified by the incident, telling LCI television: "As its been described to me, this incident surprises me and seems highly improbable."

A spokesman said Renault experts were inspecting the electronic speed control, brakes and automatic gearbox of the car. The results should be known by early Wednesday.

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