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Mauldin, SC
December 6, 2004
11:31

U.S. Department of Transportation,
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration,
Office of Defects Investigation,
NSA-10.01, 400 7th Street, SW,
Washington, DC 20590.

Gentlemen:

Please add the following to your tabulation of vehicle complaints:

Make: Oldsmobile Intrigue GL, 2000

VIN: 1G3WS52H5Y

Problem: Rack and pinion steering assembly failure, diagnosed Dec 1, 2004

Car mileage: 68,900

Indication of problem: Clicking noise in front end at zero speed or low speed when turning steering wheel.

Cost to repair: Approximately \$725.00

Additional suspicious occurrence: Automatic transmission intermittently shifts "hard", it clunks into successive gears, rather than shifting smoothly. This vehicle is driven easily, and not subjected to abusive acceleration, etc.

Commentary:

This vehicle was purchased in August, 2000, and has been well maintained. Several months ago, a slight clicking noise was experienced in the steering, and the power steering fluid was discovered to be near empty. (The fluid level had been periodically checked on previous occasions.) The fluid level was refilled, but the front end clicking noise became progressively worse, so the car was taken to a reliable local mechanic for diagnosis. This is when the rack and pinion was found to be defective. Fluid was also found in the "boot", which was why the power steering fluid level was found to be low.

The car is still in the shop after 6 days, and will not be ready for at least two more days. The cause of the delay is twofold: 1. The first replacement rack and pinion was found to be defective. 2. Finding another replacement has been troublesome for the shop due to the scarcity of the part. Is this an indicator of more widespread problem? Your files seem to indicate this.

Thank you for your concern. The failure of a steering mechanism on a car that is only four years old and has less than 70,000 miles on it is certainly cause for alarm. I am thankful that I was able to get it diagnosed and repaired before a serious accident would have resulted.

Sincerely,

Mauldin, SC

Janis
1/10/05