

U.S. Department
of TransportationNational 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

Date Received

 Od or _____
 r_d _____
 od_r _____
 up_tr _____

Reference No.

10115842

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name _____

Street _____

Yucca Rd.

Apt. No. _____

City _____

State _____

Zip Code _____

Daytime Telephone Number

() _____

 Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of this report to the manufacturer of your vehicle? ☒ YES ☐ NO
 In the absence of an authorization, NHTSA WILL NOT provide your name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.

Signature of Owner _____

Date 3/13/05

PRODUCT INFORMATION

Vehicle Identification No. (VIN) (Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side)

1 6 2 U A 5 2 4 0 2 9

Make

Pontiac
Sunfire

Model

Sunfire
4-Door

Year

2002

Purchased Date

Dealer's Name

M & C Motors Inc.

Engine Size

3.2

☐ Turbo☐ Diesel☒ Gas

No. Cylinders

4

☒ Fuel Injection☒ New ☐ Used

Dealer's City

Flagstaff

State

AZ

Zip Code

86001

Manufacture Date
(on driver's door or pillar)

Transmission Type

☐ Manual☒ Automatic

Restraint System

☒ Driver's Air Bag☐ Motorbelt☐ Passenger's Air Bag☐ 2-Point Belt☐ 3-Point Belt

Cruise Control

☐ Yes☐ No

Drivetrain

☒ Front☐ Rear☐ 4-Wheel

Vehicle Type

☒ Car☐ Van☐ Minivan☐ Other☐ Sport Utility☐ Truck☐ Motorcycle☐ Other

Body Style

☐ 2-Door☐ 4-Door☐ Stationwagon☐ Pick Up Truck☐ Other

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Part Name(s)

In Tank Fuel Pump
Strainer

Location

☐ Left☐ Front☐ Right☐ Rear

Failed Part(s)

☒ Original☐ Replacement

Handicap Adaptive Equip

☐ Yes☐ No

TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Brand

N/A

Tire Name

Complete Tire Size

DOT No.

No. of Failures

Date(s) of Failure(s)

Mileage at Failure(s)

Vehicle Speed at Failure(s)

Failed Part(s)
Available?☐ Yes ☐ NoNHTSA Previously
Contacted?☐ Yes ☐ No

APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION

(Please describe in detail the incident(s), failure(s), crash(es), and injury(ies). Attach photos if available.)

Crash

☐ Yes ☐ No

Fire

☐ Yes ☐ No

Number of Persons Injured

0

Number of Fatalities

0

Reported to Manufacturer

☐ Yes ☒ No

Narrative Description of Incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies).

(Attached letter)

Continue on back.

The Privacy Act of 1974 - Public Law 93-579 This information is requested pursuant to 49 U.S.C. Chapter 301. You are under no obligation to respond to this questionnaire. Your responses may be used to assist NHTSA in determining whether a manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If NHTSA proceeds with administrative enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your responses, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.

Mail postage free or fax to 202-386-7882

Ann Mitchell
National Highway Safety Administration
400 7th Street, Room 5119, NTS-21
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ms. Mitchell,

I have a complaint concerning a 2002 Pontiac Sunfire, 2.2 L, four cylinder, 70,000 miles, which I purchased from McCoy Motors in Flagstaff, Arizona.

I was getting good service from the vehicle until recently, it started stalling and would start up after being off for a little while. Sometimes it would overheat and when it cooled down, it would start up again.

On January 16, 2005, while enroute to Hoover Dam, the vehicle stalled again. This time, it would not start up, so a wrecker was called, which then towed the car to Kingman, Arizona. It was towed 59 miles to an Exxon Service Station. The wrecker service cost \$ 333.00. They ran a computer diagnostic test and nothing showed. The mechanic stated there was high resistance in the fuel pump. So he upgraded the burnt out fuse from 15 amp to 25 amp. The vehicle started up and was driven to Flagstaff without stalling again.

In Flagstaff, the vehicle was checked out again and the dealer said it was okay since they could not find out what caused the problem. The vehicle was driven to Glendale, Arizona approximately one week from the date that the dealer said it was okay. On the way, it stalled several times on the way.

In Glendale, it was taken to a GMC Pontiac dealer, who performed another diagnostic test and replaced the fuel pump. It is running okay for now.

Later, a computer print-out revealed that other parties have had similar complaints concerning the 2000 to 2004 Pontiac Sunfire. An on-going investigation is supposedly being conducted by your department; Ref. ODI Action No. PBO2-66 dated 9-6-2002. Other information can be found on <http://www-odir+SA.dot.20v/cars/problems/defect/result.CFM> and list of complaints with reference to the in-tank fuel pump strainer, which have collapsed resulting in insufficient gas being in the ignition system. Resulting in high resistance in the fuel pump and burning out the 15 amp. Replacing the 15 amp fuse temporarily with a 25 amp fuse evidently will allow temporary operation but in the long run could damage the fuel pump in the gas tank. An electrical shortage in the fuel pump could result in blowing up the vehicle resulting in physical injury or fatality.

These vehicle should be recalled and corrected by the GMC dealers at their expense and owners of 2000 to 2004 Pontiac Sunfire should be reimbursed if they have had to correct the problems themselves.

Furthermore, the oxygen sensor sold by auto parts dealer are not the same as the oxygen sensor sold by the GMC dealer, which have a different type harness. I purchased an oxygen sensor from Auto Zone and Pep Boys and they wouldn't fit, so I had to go to a GMC dealer to get the right one.

Something has to be done to correct these problems concerning the 2000 to 2004 Pontiac Sunfire mechanical and electrical problems. Maybe contacting the Better Business Department.

You are probably wondering how I got your address. I obtained it from a good friend of mine, Lawrence Garnanez, who is employed by the Navajo Nation Highway Safety Department at Window Rock, Arizona, he referred me to you.

We had to pay over \$730 to correct the problem which may have been attributed to a collapsed in-tank fuel pump strainer which costs about \$18.50. Considering the price that a person has to pay for vehicles these days, the vehicles should at least be reliable and mechanics should be aware of what is causing the erratic operation of their product.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I hope that something can be done to correct the complaint.

Sincerely yours,

[REDACTED]

Tuba City, Arizona [REDACTED]

I am not satisfied with this car

What things
have gone
wrong with
the car?

Approximately 1 year ago, the fuel level indicator began showing erratic fuel levels, which caused me to run out of gas. I was told that it needed a fuel sending unit replaced.

Now, I am told the fuel strainer is clogged, and that my fuel pump may now be damaged due to this problem. There is an OPEN investigation into this by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, reference ODI Action No. PE02-88, filed on 9/6/2002. <http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/defect/results.cfm>.

General
comments?

I am disappointed that Pontiac does not offer to fix the fuel system delivery problem, even though there are numerous Technical Service Bulletins describing the problem, and an ongoing NHTSA investigation.



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25th Jul
2003, 08:27

I have been having this EXACT problem with my 2000 SunFire for about a year now, i.e. the erratic reading on the gas, etc. Now, the car has taken to stalling on me at times, starting back almost immediately sometimes and not at all others necessitating it being towed to a shop.

I've replaced the fuel filter twice in 3 months, as I was told "bad gas" might have clogged it. Now, I've had it back to a Pontiac dealer after the last stall, and they've run a diagnostic check and can find nothing wrong.

I'm wondering what to do next -- but this sheds some light that I had not heard about before.

[Request deletion of this comment](#)

31st Jul
2003, 06:51

This is a follow-up to my last comment on here.

Since my post, I went to another Pontiac dealership asking for them to repair my stalling problem by any means necessary. I explained to them how it only stalls on long, graded hills, and only after driving about 30-45 min. when the engine gets hot. I also told them how once you get to flat land again, or let the engine cool, it typically starts again.

After hearing this, the technician said they've gotten a bulletin from Pontiac about such a situation, and it suggests a problem with the fuel strainer in the gas tank. He said it apparently is a model-wide problem with those strainers collapsing, causing stalling problems when going uphill and when the engine is hot.

They dropped the fuel tank, and replaced this fuel strainer. He said that my former strainer had indeed collapsed, and would not allow proper fuel to be sent to the engine

once the engine heated up and when I got to a hill.

I've been driving it a full week now since the repair without any problems whatsoever. My erratic gas gauge problem also seems to have been rectified with this repair.

The part cost \$18.50. I suggest anyone with similar problems attempt to have a dealer go this route before trying anything else, especially if someone recommends replacing the fuel pump. Apparently that wouldn't solve the problem anyway, and you'd be out a stack of cash for nothing.

[Request deletion of this comment](#)

7th Aug
2003, 11:06

Well, I finally found a bit of information on the exact same problem. Car just stalls with no warning, all dash lights come on, and you have to wait 10 to 15 minutes before the car will start again. Sometimes, it just won't start at all.

Is GMC going to address this problem? This has been happening off and on for over a year, and no mechanic has been able to find the problem. What was the total cost of the repair though the GMC dealer? You said the part cost \$18.50, but what did they charge you to drop the tank and repair?

HELP!!!

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11th Aug
2003, 10:05

Whether GM will make fixing this problem a priority, I don't know. All I know is what I stated in my last post, and that's that the Pontiac dealers **SHOULD** have been warned about the strainer problem based on the bulletin referenced to me by the service tech. at the dealership that repaired my car.

I still have not had any problem with my car since the fuel strainer was replaced, and I've gone up some wicked hills since then. Right now, I'm confident the problem is gone.

Whether it'll stay gone, I don't know. If there is another condition that's causing the fuel strainers to collapse, then it probably will someday. But if the original factory strainers are the problem, then maybe it's fixed. Or at least that's what I'm hoping.

As for the cost for repairs -- the new in-tank strainer (\$18.50) was the easy part. Dropping the tank and other associated labor cost me \$111.50 for two hours labor, bringing the total cost to about \$130.00. Given that I had to have it fixed, I had no choice, but to ante up and pay it. I'm not sure about an outside mechanic doing it, though. All of the ones I spoke with wanted to put a new fuel pump on it -- NONE

suggested the fuel strainer problem.

[Request deletion of this comment](#)

23rd Nov
2004, 17:01

I have a 2000 Pontiac Sunfire SE. I too, have been having stalling problems. Primarily when the weather changes from Summer to Fall. The colder months and the change in the gasoline definitely effect my car. The car will run and then for no reason stall out and die. Sometimes the car will die if I am just sitting at a light in neutral. Also, at times, it seems to not want to take gas when the gas pedal is pressed. It almost feels like a clog of some sort. Yet no mechanic or the dealership seems to find anything wrong.

Since I have had my Sunfire, I have replaced the head gasket, catalytic converter, alternator, clutch, and I have a wheel bearing going out.

I am so fed up!

Erin of Spokane, WA.

[Request deletion of this comment](#)

12th Jan
2005, 00:17

I have a 2000 Pontiac Sunfire has 108,000 my fuel pump went out last week I wonder if the strainer problem could have been what caused it to do that. If there is anyone out there who reads this and can identify with my problem please e-mail me at jdgatiff@yahoo.com. The fuel pump on my car has the pinch together quick connects on it. But when I went to order the new fuel pump nobody has the pump with the same quick connect fittings to connect to my car. the only two places where I can find that shows there is two different types on that car is my haynes manual and the service dept at my dealer, but the service dept does not know the part number for the type on my car. And the parts dept only shows the ones opposite to what is currently on my car. Please help if you have ran into this problem and found a solution to it.