



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 252

Date Received

Repository ☐

04-APR-2005

2005 APR 28 AM

Reference No.

8103400

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name [REDACTED]
Address [REDACTED]
City **MERCED** State **CA** Zip Code [REDACTED]

Daytime Telephone Number

E-mail Address

Evening Telephone Number

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of this report to the manufacturer of your vehicle?

In the absence of an authorization, NHTSA WILL NOT provide your name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.

Signature of Owner [REDACTED]

Date **4/16/05**

☒ YES

☒ NO

VEHICLE INFORMATION

17 digit Vehicle Identification Number located at bottom of windshield on driver's side
JTEG820V72 Make **TOYOTA** Model **RAV4** Model Year **2002**

Date Purchased **1-20-02** Dealer's Name and Telephone Number **Stockton Toyota Town** Engine: No. Cylinders **4** Fuel Type: **Gas**
Original Owner ☒ Dealer's City **Stockton** State **CA** Zip Code **95210**

Transmission Type ☒ **Automatic** Powertrain **4 WHEEL DRIVE** Vehicle Component Code **015000 STEERING:HYDRAULIC POWER ASSIST SYSTEM**
☒ **Antilock Brakes** ☒ **Cruise Control** Multiple Failures: **1**

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s) **04-APR-2005** Failure Mileage **26,000** Failure Speed **85**
1-805 **57 mph**

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Make **DOT** Tire Model (Name or Number) **DOT** Tire Size (Example P215/65R15)
DOT No. (Example: DOTM19ABC036) ☐ 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 **1** Number of Deaths **0** Reported to Police **Y**

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 A CLICKING NOISE CAME FROM FRONT OF THE VEHICLE. STEERING FAILED TO TURN PROPERLY, AND THE DRIVER WAS UNABLE TO MAINTAIN CONTROL OF THE VEHICLE, AND IT CRASHED INTO THE CONCRETE BARRIER. UPON IMPACT, BOTH AIR BAGS DID NOT DEPLOY. DRIVER REFUSED MEDICAL ATTENTION AND WENT TO THE HOSPITAL ON HER OWN. VEHICLE WAS TOWED TO THE DEALER. *AK
I was driving to Fresno from Merced it was raining hard, I was on the
passenger lane going at a rate of 56 to 57 mph when all of the sudden I
heard a click and the RAV4 began to glide to the left, I tried to gain control of
steering, but the wheel just kept going round and round, I had no steering
power. I had 4 passengers, which are still going to the doctor for treatment
of injury. I had the car towed to Country Auto Body in Merced and they
said that the rack & pinion snapped. (Attach & Report from my insurance &

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.

Toyota
Manufacturer

Writers Direct Telephone (310) 468-5638
Writers Direct Fax (310) 381-5017

March 14, 2005

COPY

MERCED CA

Re: Date of Loss: January 8, 2005
Vehicle: 2002 Toyota Rav4
VIN: JTBGH20

Dear

This letter will acknowledge your communication with our Customer Relations Department regarding the accident as captioned above and follow our telephone conversations.

You stated that while driving the vehicle, you felt that it started pulling to the left and you could not control the steering, which caused you to strike four barrels on the highway. You said that the vehicle's steering mechanism was defective which led it to break, and you want a replacement vehicle. We previously offered to cover the cost of repairs to the steering mechanism.

Your case was reviewed by a professional engineer. It was determined that the fracture was caused by overload due to impact. That is, when the tire struck the barrels, the force of the impact caused the fracture. There is clear evidence at the break site that shows it was due to impact rather than failure or metal fatigue.

We are very sorry about this most unfortunate incident, however, from our inspection it has been determined that this incident was not a result of any type of manufacturer defect.

Our previous offer to repair your vehicle stands despite these findings. If you choose to accept this offer, please complete the enclosed Release for \$1,326.22 which is the amount of repair based on the estimate from Courtesy Olds-Cadillac, and return it our office. Once the completed Release is received, a check will be promptly mailed to you.

Thank you for your patience and for allowing us to address your concerns.

Very truly yours,

Troy H. Higa
Claims Administrator
Legal Department

RELEASE OF PROPERTY DAMAGE CLAIMS

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That [REDACTED] for and in consideration of the sum of ONE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED TWENTY SIX and 22/100 DOLLARS (\$1,326.22) me in hand paid by TOYOTA MOTOR CORPORATION and TOYOTA MOTOR SALES, U.S.A., INC. and all their subsidiaries and dealers, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, I being of lawful age, for myself, my heirs, administrators, executors, successors and assigns from any and actions, claims and demands of any and all known kinds for property damage only whatever nature including consequential damages to the 2002 Toyota Rav4, Vehicle Identification Number JTEGH20 [REDACTED] sustained or received on or about January 8, 2005 for which property damage I claim the said defendants to be legally liable, which liability is expressly denied, it being understood and agreed that the acceptance of said sum is in full accord and satisfaction of a disputed claim and that the payment of said sum is not an admission of liability. I hereby declare that I fully understand the terms of this settlement: that the amount stated herein is the sole consideration of this release and that I voluntarily accept said sum for the purpose of making a full and final compromise, adjustment and settlement of all claims for property damage losses and damages resulting or to result from said accident.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my/our hands and seal(s) this _____ day of

_____, 2005

READ CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING

[REDACTED]

J₂ Engineering, Inc.

Consulting Forensic Engineers

7626 North Ingram Avenue, Suite 106
Fresno, California 93711

Telephone (559) 437-5864
FAX (559) 437-3887

recon@j2eng.com

March 15, 2005

James E. Flynn, BS, PE
Howard W. Underwood, BS, MS, PE
Stephen R. Harper, BS, PE
Robert Decker, BS
Nancy Tam, BS
David Fleming, BS, CFP
Daryl Shuster, BS
Mark Peabody, BS, PE

Calvin Smith
Office Administrator

Patricia Lee
Office Assistant

Allstate Insurance Company-Claims Office
7120 N. Marks Avenue, Suite 110
Fresno, CA 93711
Attn: Ms. Jolyn Elliott

J₂ File No. J05014

Subject: [REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Elliott:

We have completed our preliminary investigation of the January 8, 2005, motor vehicle accident involving a 2004 Toyota "RAV4" four-door sport-utility vehicle, owned and operated by [REDACTED]. It has been reported that [REDACTED] was traveling southerly on State Route 99 when she lost control of her vehicle as a result of a mechanical failure.

The [REDACTED] vehicle was inspected on January 13, 2005, at Courtesy Oldsmobile, in Merced, California. The inspection revealed that the [REDACTED] vehicle had sustained a minor impact to the left front fender (see Photograph 1). The inspection revealed that the rack and pinion unit of the vehicle was damaged. The rack was found to have fractured between teeth (see Photograph 2). The inspection revealed that the left side of the rack was still attached to the left tie rod. The right side of the rack was still located within the rack and pinion housing and



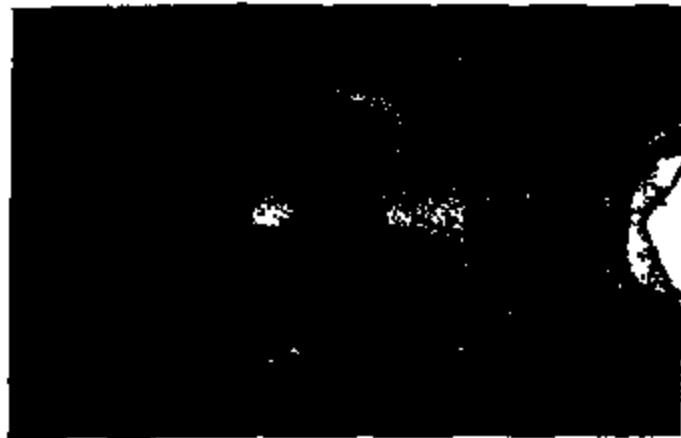
Photograph 1



Photograph 2

Page 2

attached to the right tie rod. The left side of the rack and pinion housing was fractured where the left boot would have been attached to the housing (see Photograph 3). Pieces of the aluminum housing were found within the left boot.



Photograph 3

Our inspection of the [REDACTED] vehicle did not reveal the presence of any evidence of an impact which could have caused or contributed to the failure of the rack. In order to determine the cause of the failure of the rack, it would be necessary to remove the rack and pinion unit from the vehicle and subject it to examination by a qualified metallurgical engineer. Such an examination should be conducted with the participation of all parties involved in this matter.

Please contact the undersigned should there be any additional questions.

Very truly yours,

J. ENGINEERING, INC.



Stephen R. Harper