Form Approved: O.M.B. No. 2127-0008

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

Date Received: 2005 MAY 20 AM 5:53

10122607

Od_or ___ ___
rt_dt ___ ___
od_rt ___ ___
up_ltr ___ ___

Reference No.

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name [redacted]

Street No. [redacted] Apt. No.

City Decatur State IL Zip Code [redacted]

Daytime Telephone Number [redacted]

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

Signature of Owner [redacted] Date 4/28/05

PRODUCT INFORMATION

Vehicle Identification No. (VIN) (17 Digits) *(Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side)*: 1 C 4 G P 5 4 L 2 W B [redacted]

Make: Chrysler

Model: Town & Country LX

Year: 1998

Purchased Date: 5/11/98 [X] New [ ] Used

Dealer's Name: HPR Automotive Super Store -1320 W. Jackson St

Dealer's City: Sullivan State: IL Zip Code: 61951-1034

Engine Size (CID/CC/L): 3.8L 230 No. Cylinders: 6
[ ] Turbo [ ] Diesel [X] Gasoline [X] Fuel Injection

Manufacture Date (on driver's door or pilar): 2/27/98

Transmission Type: [ ] Manual [X] Automatic

Restraint System: [X] Driverside Air Bag [ ] Motorbelt [X] Passengerside Air Bag [ ] 2-Point Belt [X] 3-Point Belt

Cruise Control: [X] Yes [ ] No

Drivetrain: [X] Front [ ] Rear [ ] 4-Wheel

Vehicle Type: [ ] Car [ ] Sport Utility [ ] Van [ ] Truck [X] Minivan [ ] Motorcycle [ ] Other

Body Style: [X] 2-Door [ ] 4-Door [ ] Stationwagon [ ] Pick Up Truck [ ] Other

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Part Name(s): Tie Rod end left and right. Rack & pinion (steering gear)

Location: [X] Left [X] Right [X] Front [ ] Rear

Failed Part(s): [X] Original [ ] Replacement

Handicap Adaptive Equip: [ ] Yes [X] No

TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Brand | 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 [ ] No | NHTSA 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	Fire	Number of Persons Injured	Number of Fatalities	Reported to Manufacturer
[ ] Yes [X] No	[ ] Yes [X] No	0	0	[X] Yes [ ] No

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

PLEASE NOTE: Vehicle had 92 miles on odometer when purchased new.

original OEM tie rod ends retained by [redacted]

Original OEM rack and pinion steering gear retained by Hazelrigg's, Decatur, Illinois

SEE ATTACHED NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION - TWO PAGES WITH EXHIBITS A,B,C,D,E

Continue on back.

The Privacy Act of 1974 - Public Law 93-579 *This information is requested pursuant to a49 U.S.C. Chapter 301. You are under no obligation to respond to this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist NHTSA in determining whether a manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If NHTSA proceeds with administration enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.*

Mail postage free or fax to 202-366-7882

[redacted] VEHICLE OWNER'S QUESTIONNAIRE
NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION- FAILURES

On 12/22/04 vehicle was presented to Hazelrigg's, Inc. Decatur, Illinois with binding noise when turning steering wheel to right, sometimes with popping sound. Noise came from front center of floor. Vehicle mileage was 28,132. Rack and pinion–steering gear was replaced (see Exhibit A)

On 3/14/05 vehicle was presented to Hazelrigg's Inc., Decatur, Illinois with binding, squeaking noise when turning steering wheel right to left. Noise came from front center floor. Vehicle mileage was 28,796. Both outer tie rod ends were diagnosed to be locked up and noisy. I declined replacement with Chrysler OEM tie rod ends since these OEM tie rod ends cannot be lubricated. (See Exhibit B)

On 3/15/05 vehicle was presented to Neal Tire and Auto Service, Decatur, Illinois to install MOOG outer tie rod ends. These tie rod ends have a grease fitting that permits them to be lubricated. Vehicle mileage was 28,815. Vehicle has performed satisfactorily since these tie rod ends were replaced. (See Exhibit C)

I am submitting this questionnaire for the following concerns:

1. Chrysler's apparent disregard for safety and reliability of steering components in its 1996-1998 Town and Country minivans.

2. Steering components with lifetime lubrication should be designed to last at least exceed 30,000 miles regardless vehicle's age.

3. The rack and pinion-steering gear should be designed to tolerate added loading by outer tie rod ends without being damaged.

4. Outer tie rod ends if initially designed with "lifetime lubrication", should permit a fitting to be inserted and lubricated at a 20,000 to 30,000 mile inspection. (see Exhibit D)

5. Based on information that I have found, Chrysler may have known since 1997 about potential problems with its outer tie rod ends on its 1996-1998 minivans. (See Exhibit E)

6. Chrysler could develop a more definitive procedure to diagnose if a rack and pinion steering gear is damaged and needs to be replaced when it is connected to outer tie rod ends that are seized.

[redacted]

7. Chrysler could issue an advisory recall on its 1996-1998 minivans to determine if outer tie rod ends are seized or in the process of being seized.

8. Simultaneous failure of both rack and pinion steering gear and outer tie rod ends will lead to a compromised steering capability of the vehicle. This is a major safety concern.

9. Chrysler's Customer Center has been contacted twice regarding my vehicle's steering component(s) failure. Their response is that you have an old vehicle, totally ignoring the fact that the vehicle has less than 29,000 miles.

10. When an owner presents a Chrysler 1996-1998 minivan to a Chrysler dealership for a premature (under 30,000 miles) original OEM steering component(s) failure, Chrysler could replace these components under one of the following options:

    (a) Under manufacturers standard warranty.

    (b) Extend warranty regardless of vehicle's age.

    (c) Prorate cost of component(s) replacement based on the component(s) design life regardless of the age of the vehicle.

ALLDATA Online Log Out | Help

EXHIBIT D

DECATUR PUBLIC LIBRARY

Select Vehicle | New TSBs | Technician's Reference

Component Search: OK

Conversion Calculator

1998 Chrysler Truck Town & Country Van 2WD V6-230 3.8L VIN L SMFI

Binding, Sticking or Seized

Testing and Inspection

CONDITION	POSSIBLE CAUSES	CORRECTION
CATCHES, STICKS IN CERTAIN POSITIONS OR IS DIFFICULT TO TURN.	1. Low power steering fluid level.	1. Fill power steering fluid reservoir to specified level and perform leakage diagnosis.
	2. Tires not inflated to specified pressure.	2. Inflate tires to the specified pressure.
	3. Lack of lubrication in front suspension lower control arm ball joints.	3. Replace lower ball joint.
	4. Worn lower ball joint.	4. Replace the lower ball joint.
	5. Lack of lubrication in front suspension outer tie rod ends.	5. Lubricate tie rod ends if they are not a lubricated for life type. If tie rod end is a lubricated for life type, replace tie rod end.
	6. Loose power steering pump drive belt.	6. Tighten the power steering pump drive belt to the specified tension. See accessory drive in service manual.
	7. Faulty power steering pump flow control. (Verify cause using Power Steering Pump Test Procedure.)	7. Replace power steering pump.
	8. Excessive friction in steering column or intermediate shaft.	8. Correct condition. (See Steering Column Service Procedure)
	9. Steering column coupler binding.	9. Realign the steering column to eliminate the binding condition.
	10. Binding lower ball joint.	10. Replace the lower ball joint.
	11. Excessive friction in steering gear.	11. Replace steering gear assembly.

Zoom Sized for Print

© 2005 ALLDATA LLC. All rights reserved.
Terms of Use

ALLDATA Online Log Out | Help

EXHIBIT E

DECATUR PUBLIC LIBRARY

Select Vehicle | New TSBs | Technician's Reference Component Search: OK

Conversion Calculator

1998 Chrysler Truck Town & Country Van 2WD V6-230 3.8L VIN L SMFI

Vehicle Level → Technical Service Bulletins → All Technical Service Bulletins → Tie Rod - Intermittent Popping in Front End ←

Tie Rod - Intermittent Popping in Front End

NO: 19-14-97

GROUP: Steering

DATE: Dec. 19, 1997

SUBJECT:
Intermittent Popping In Front End

MODELS:
1996 - 1998 (NS) Town & Country/Caravan/Voyager
1996 - 1998 (GS) Chrysler Voyager (International Market)

SYMPTOM/CONDITION:
Intermittent popping/clunking/snapping sound coming from the front end (left, right or both sides) may be heard and felt in the steering wheel. This condition usually occurs after driving approximately 5+ mi. (8+ km) on smooth road surfaces. Once the sound begins it will continue to occur until encountering a bump in the road, the sound will reoccur after driving approximately 5+ mi. (8+ km) on smooth road surfaces.

DIAGNOSIS:
Test drive the vehicle on a smooth road surface and listen for a popping/clunking/snapping sound from the vehicle front floor area. When the sound is heard it will also be felt in the steering wheel. If available, use a sound listening device such as Pentastar Service Equipment ChassisEAR(TM) (W-06600) to pin point the sound. If the sound is coming from the tie rod end(s), perform the Repair Procedure, otherwise further diagnosis will be required.

PARTS REQUIRED:

2	04797706	End, Tie Rod

REPAIR PROCEDURE:
This bulletin involves replacing both steering rack tie rod ends.

1. Using the procedure outlined on page 19-33 of the 1998 Town & Country, Caravan and Voyager service manual (Publication No. 81-370-8105) replace the steering rack tie rod ends.

POLICY:
Reimbursable within the provisions of the warranty.

TIME ALLOWANCE:

Labor Operation No: 19-63-01-90 1.1 Hrs.

FAILURE CODE: P8 - New Part

© 2005 ALLDATA LLC. All rights reserved.
Terms of Use

THE ATTACHMENTS TO THIS DOCUMENT HAVE BEEN REMOVED TO PROTECT UNWARRANTED INVASION OF PERSONAL PRIVACY PURSUANT TO EXEMPTION 6 OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(6).