

[REDACTED]
TROY, N.Y.
[REDACTED]

JUL 15 AM 9 20

*Added to
10124801*

July 7, 2005

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

Re: ODI ID Number: 10124801
Complaint Regarding 2003 Hyundai Sonata

Gentlemen:

I am writing to request that the NHTSA open an investigation and, if appropriate, initiate a recall regarding the extremely dangerous defect described in the above Complaint which I filed last month.

As I stated in my Complaint, the wheel covers on my 2003 Hyundai Sonata apparently move on the rims while the car is operating, causing the wheel covers to flatten and eventually slice off the tire valve stems, resulting in immediate and catastrophic tire failure. For your convenience, I am enclosing a copy of my Complaint, together with three (3) other virtually identical Complaints filed with respect to the 2003 Hyundai Sonata by other individuals.

I have spoken to representatives of Hyundai Motor America regarding this issue. They admitted that they were aware of the problem. They would offer no solution other than suggesting that I purchase different wheel covers and see if that alleviates the problem. The regional Hyundai representative, a Greg Pavlov, told me that Hyundai Motor America had considered asking for one of the tires (with rim and wheel cover) from my car so they could test it, but that they had subsequently decided not to "inconvenience" me by doing so.

I feel that this is an extremely serious problem which warrants immediate intervention by the NHTSA. I realize that the number of Complaints is quite small given the number of vehicles sold, but the potential for serious injury or death due to the nature of the defect far outweighs that. I, personally, experienced two (2) catastrophic tire failures as a result of this defect, before I ascertained the nature of the problem. The second incident occurred on a busy entrance ramp to an Interstate during rush hour. Because I was in such a dangerous place, I had to contact E911 for assistance. I could easily have been killed or seriously injured by oncoming traffic.

This appears, by all accounts, to be a very unique problem. I have been to numerous tire retailers seeking a solution and, to date, I have yet to encounter anyone who has seen this problem before on

*Mace
7/19/05*

-page 2-

any vehicle.

It is my fear that it is only a matter of time before someone is killed or seriously injured as a result of this defect. Obviously, given my experience and that of the other people who filed virtually identical Complaints, Hyundai Motor America has no intention of taking this seriously unless your agency intervenes.

If you would like copies of pertinent documentation, such as my tire valve replacement invoices, service invoices from my local Hyundai dealer, and my communications with Hyundai Motor America, I would be happy to provide the same. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further, I can be reached days at [REDACTED]

Thank you for your anticipated courtesy and attention to this important matter.

Very truly yours,
[REDACTED]



Office of Defects Investigation

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- 1-800-424-9153 or
- 1-202-484-5238

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Search Results

Report Date : July 7, 2005 at 01:46 PM	New Search
SEARCH TYPE : VEHICLE	
YEAR : 2003	
Make : HYUNDAI	
Model : SONATA	
Type : PASSENGER CAR	Print Version

Results : 3 | All records displayed

Make : HYUNDAI	Model : SONATA	Year : 2003
Manufacturer : HYUNDAI MOTOR COMPANY		
Crash : No	Fire : No	Number of Injuries: 0
ODI ID Number : 10111680		Date of Failure: November 9, 2004

VIN : KMHWF2

Component: WHEELS:CAP/COVER/HUB

Summary:

SOMETHING IS CUTTING THE STEM AND THE TIRE AROUND THE STEM AREA. TWICE THE DEALER REPLACED THE TIRE AND THEY ARE UNABLE TO LOCATE THE CAUSE. THE PROBLEM IS STILL RECURRING. THE DEALER HAS PASSED THIS INFORMATION OVER TO THE MANUFACTURER. *NM THE CONSUMER INDICATED THA THE HUB CAP CUT THE TIRE AND VALVE STEM. HERE HAS BEEN 3 STEMS CUT ALL ON THE FRONT TIRES. *BF *NM

[Document Search](#)
 Check to Request Research. Submit below.

Make : HYUNDAI	Model : SONATA	Year : 2003
Manufacturer : HYUNDAI MOTOR COMPANY		
Crash : No	Fire : No	Number of Injuries: 0
ODI ID Number : 10124801		Date of Failure:

June 2, 2005

VIN : KMHWF [REDACTED]

Component: WHEELS:CAP/COVER/HUB

Summary:

THE WHEEL COVERS ON MY 2003 HYUNDAI SONATA ARE MOVING ON THE RIMS OF MY TIRES CAUSING THE TIRE VALVE STEMS TO FLATTEN AND EVENTUALLY WEAR THROUGH CAUSING SUDDEN TIRE FAILURE. I HAVE HAD TWO (2) SUDDEN TIRE VALVE FAILURES SINCE PURCHASING FOUR NEW UNIROYAL TIGER PAW 205/65R15 TIRES FROM B.J.'S WHOLESALE CLUB ON MAY 7, 2005. THE TIRES I BOUGHT WERE THE EXACT SIZE SPECIFIED FOR MY CAR IN THE B.J.'S TIRE CATALOG AND MY OWNER'S MANUAL. THE HYUNDAI DEALER TRIED PUTTING ON NEW WHEEL COVERS BUT THAT DIDN'T HELP. LATER THEY SAID THAT THE TIRES WERE STICKING OUT TOO FAR OVER THE RIMS, CAUSING THEM TO BE IN CONTACT WITH THE WHEEL COVER, WHICH CAUSED THE WHEEL COVERS TO MOVE AND FLATTEN THE VALVE STEMS. THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE TIRES WERE THE RIGHT SIZE BUT SAID THEY WERE SOMEHOW DIFFERENT FROM THE TIRES THAT CAME WITH THE CAR. THERE IS NOTHING IN THE HYUNDAI OWNER'S MANUAL WHICH SPECIFIES ANY PARTICULAR TIRE OR BRAND OF TIRE, OR WHICH STATES THAT CERTAIN TIRES CANNOT BE USED. THE ONLY SPECIFICATION IS THE SIZE, WHICH IS 205/65R15, EXACTLY WHAT I PURCHASED. THE PROBLEM IS ONGOING. AT THE DEALER'S SUGGESTION, I AM DRIVING WITHOUT THE WHEEL COVERS. EVEN IF I BUY ANOTHER SET OF TIRES, HOW DO I KNOW THEY WON'T CAUSE THE SAME PROBLEM?

 Document Search

 Check to Request Research. Submit below.

Make : HYUNDAI

Model :
SONATA

Year : 2003

Manufacturer : HYUNDAI MOTOR COMPANY

Crash : No

Fire : No

Number of
Injuries: 0

ODI ID Number : 10126600

Date of Failure:
June 9, 2005

VIN : KMHWF [REDACTED]

Component: WHEELS:CAP/COVER/HUB

Summary:

I HAVE A 2003 HYUNDAI SONATA. A PROBLEM HAS DEVELOPED RECENTLY IN WHICH MY HUBCAPS ARE ROTATING ON THE WHEEL AND CUTTING THE TIRE STEMS THUS RESULTING IN BOTH OF MY FRONT TIRE GOING FLAT AT ONCE. I REPORTED THIS THRU THE HYUNDAI COMPLAINT HOTLINE. THEY THOUGHT I WAS NUTS. I DID A GOOGLE SEARCH AND FOUND OTHER SONATA OWNERS WITH SIMILAR PROBLEM. THEY ALSO REPORTED THIS TO THE HYUNDAI COMPLAINT HOTLINE WITH SIMILAR UNSATISFACTORY RESULTS. I BELIEVE THIS IS A SAFETY PROBLEM. THE LAST OCCURANCE THAT THIS HAPPENED

WAS IN HEAVY TRAFFIC ON INTERSTATE 75 IN OHIO. AFTER A "HARD BRAKE" BOTH FRONT HUBCAPS ROTATED AND CUT BOTH HUBCAPS AT ONCE RESULTING IN A DUAL FLATS IN HEAVY TRAFFIC.

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1-888-DASH-2-DOT
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TTY

- 1-800-424-9153 or
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Help

Search Results

Report Date : July 7, 2005 at 01:47 PM

New Search

SEARCH TYPE : VEHICLE

YEAR : 2003

Make : HYUNDAI

Model : SONATA

Type : PASSENGER CAR

Print Version

Results : 1 | All records displayed

Make : HYUNDAI Model : SONATA Year : 2003

Manufacturer : HYUNDAI MOTOR COMPANY

Crash : No Fire : No Number of Injuries: 0

ODI ID Number : 10123910

Date of Failure:
March 28, 2005

VIN : KMHWF

Component: TIRES:VALVE

Summary:

ON 03/26/05, I PURCHASED BF GOODRICH TOURING T/A PRO SERIES (SIZE P205/65R15) FOR MY 2003 SONATA AT SAM'S CLUB. IN A MONTH AND A HALF, I HAD 4 FLAT TIRES AND 10 VALVES REPLACED BECAUSE THE HUB CAPS SPIN AND SLICE THE VALVES. I LOST 7.5 HOURS OF WORK AND RECEIVED A BACK INJURY WHILE TRYING TO CHANGE ONE OF THE TIRES. I'VE SPOKEN TO HYUNDAI AND BF GOODRICH - BOTH OF WHICH SUGGESTED GETTING THE H RATED TIRES INSTEAD OF THE S RATED. I DID THAT, BUT IT DIDN'T WORK. I ALSO PAID \$75 FOR A DIAGNOSTICIAN TO TELL ME THAT I HAD THE WRONG BEAD ON THE TIRES BUT WHOM COULDN'T SUGGEST A SOLUTION. MY OWNER'S MANUAL SIMPLY STATES, "ALWAYS REPLACE YOUR TIRES WITH THOSE OF THE RECOMMENDED SIZE" LISTS THE TIRE SIZE SPECIFICATIONS AS P 205/65R15. THERE IS NO RECOMMENDED REPLACEMENT BRAND NAMED AND NO MENTION ABOUT HAVING THE CORRECT SIZE BEADING. I TOOK MY CAR TO ANOTHER DEALER AND LEARNED THAT THE BF GOODRICH TIRES HAVE A BEAD PROTECTANT WHICH CAUSE THE HUB CAPS TO REST DIRECTLY AGAINST MY TIRES THUS CAUSING THEM TO SPIN. THERE SHOULD BE A GAP BETWEEN THE HUBCAP AND

TIRE. I SWITCHED TO A GOODYEAR TIRE AND HAVE NOT HAD PROBLEMS SINCE. THE PROBLEM WITH SLICING VALVE STEMS ONLY OCCURS ON THE 15 INCHES TIRES WITH HUBCAPS (AS OPPOSED TO THE 16 INCHES TIRES ON ALUMINUM WHEELS.)

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**STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271

ELIOT SPITZER
Attorney General

212-416-8294

THOMAS G. CONWAY
Assistant Attorney General In Charge
Consumer Frauds and Protection Bureau

July 6, 2005

[REDACTED]
Troy, NY

Our File Number: 2005-495085
Company: Hyundai Motor America

Dear [REDACTED]

On behalf of Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, I am writing to notify you that we have received your correspondence.

We appreciate your alerting us to this matter. We believe the organization shown below may be able to assist you and we are forwarding your correspondence there.

If you do not receive a response in the near future, please follow up directly with that organization. I suggest you attach a copy of this letter or, if appropriate, mention that you are adding new information.

Thank you for contacting us.

Very truly yours,

[REDACTED]
Philip Gamma
Bureau of Consumer Frauds
And Protection

/cc: National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration
400 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20590

9/21/05
7/19/05
[Signature]

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR COMPLAINT

*See attached addendum to
Complaint*

WHAT FORM OF RELIEF ARE YOU SEEKING? (e.g., exchange, repair or money back, etc.)

*see attached
addendum*

WHO REFERRED YOU TO THIS OFFICE?

Self

READ THE FOLLOWING BEFORE SIGNING BELOW

PLEASE ATTACH TO THIS FORM PHOTOCOPIES of any papers involved (contracts, warranties, bills received, canceled checks, correspondence, etc.). **DO NOT SEND ORIGINALS.**

NOTE: In order to resolve your complaint, we may send a copy of this form to the person or firm about whom you are complaining.

In filing this complaint, I understand that the Attorney General is not my private attorney, but represents the public in enforcing laws designed to protect the public from misleading or unlawful business practices. I also understand that if I have any questions concerning my legal rights or responsibilities, I should contact a private attorney. I have no objection to the contents of this complaint being forwarded to the business or person the complaint is directed against. The above complaint is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

I also understand that any false statements made in this complaint are punishable as a Class A Misdemeanor under Section 175.30 and/or Section 210.45 of the Penal Law.

Signature:

[Redacted Signature]

Date:

6/13/05

HAVE YOU ENCLOSED COPIES OF IMPORTANT PAPERS?

Return to:

Office of the Attorney General
Bureau of Consumer Frauds and Protection
120 Broadway, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10271-8332

ADDENDUM TO COMPLAINT FORM

On May 7, 2005, I purchased and had installed four (4) new tires for my 2003 Hyundai Sonata at B.J.'s Wholesale Club in Colonie, New York. The tires were Uniroyal Tiger Paws, size 205/65R15, which is the size specified for my car both in the tire catalog at B.J.'s and in my owner's manual.

On 5/27/05, I was driving the car in Troy, New York, when the passenger front tire suddenly went flat. I called Hyundai Roadside Assistance who sent someone to change the tire. The mechanic looked for the hole in the tire but found none. He then pointed out that the tire valve stem had a large hole in it at the base. I drove back to B.J.'s on the spare. B.J.'s replaced the valve stem and put the tire back on my car.

On 6/2/05, while on an entrance ramp to I787 just over the Menands Bridge leaving Troy, New York, that same passenger side front tire suddenly went flat again. This time I was in an extremely dangerous situation, there was only a very narrow shoulder on the ramp and cars going by were barely missing my car. I called Hyundai Roadside Assistance who called 911. The 911 dispatcher sent a "Help" truck operated by the NYS Department of Transportation. That mechanic again put on my spare and again pointed out that the tire valve stem had a hole at its base. I drove back to B.J.'s where they again changed the tire valve. The B.J.'s manager insisted that there was nothing wrong with the tires or valves and suspected that sharp edges on the wheel covers were cutting the valves. After inspecting the other tire valves, they noticed that all of them had marks on them. The technicians dismantled the other three (3) tires and put in new valves. Upon leaving B.J.'s all of the tires were fine, with the wheel covers correctly installed with the tire valve stems not touching the wheel covers in any way. I then drove to my place of work in Albany, New York. Upon arriving there, I noticed that all four wheel covers were now pressing against the tire valve stems, flattening them against the wheel covers. I called B.J.'s who said that the problem was that the wheel covers were moving, not anything to do with the tires. They suggested I call the Hyundai Dealer. I immediately called Lia Hyundai, reported the problem and was told I could not get an appointment until 6/7/05.

On 6/7/05, I took the car to Lia Hyundai. They said that two (2) of the wheel covers were moving on the rims, causing the damage to my valves. They replaced the two (2) wheel covers under warranty. Upon arriving home, I inspected the tires. All of the wheel covers, including the new ones, had moved and were again flattening the valve stems. I called Lia Hyundai who said to bring the car back the next day.

On 6/8/05, I returned to Lia Hyundai and left the car. I did some research of my own on the internet and discovered that there had been two (2) identical complaints involving the 2003 Hyundai Sonata made to the NHTSA. In both cases, just as in mine, there were repeated incidents of the wheel covers cutting through the tire valve stems. One incident occurred on November 9, 2004, and the other on March 28, 2005. I called the Service Manager at Lia Hyundai, Jim Maguire, told him about the prior NHTSA complaints and, at his request, faxed him copies. When I spoke Mr. Maguire later that day, he told me he was going to share them with a representative from Hyundai Motor America and see what could be done.

Late that same day, I received a call from a Service Advisor at Lia Hyundai who informed me that they had determined that the tires I purchased stuck out over the rims and pressed against the wheel covers causing them to move. They did agree that the tires were the correct size but claimed they had a "T" speed rating, when an "H" rating was required for my car. The Service Advisor told me there was nothing more Hyundai would do. They suggested that I ask B.J.'s to let me return the tires and buy other ones. Acknowledging the unsafe condition, they removed the wheel covers from the car and put them in the trunk before allowing me to drive off. I later called and asked to speak with Mr. Maguire, but was told he had left for the day and would call me the following day. He never did.

I called Mr. Maguire again on June 13, 2005. I explained that I didn't think it was fair for Hyundai to walk away from this since the Owners Manual did not specify any particular speed rating for replacement tires, or any specification other than size, and I bought new tires in reliance on what the Owner's Manual stated. He said there was nothing he could do. I asked him what brands of tires would and would not fit on the car. He said the only tire they could be sure would work was the tire that came on the car when new, the Michelin Energy MXV4 for which he quoted a price of \$160.00 each before installation and tax. After some further discussion he said he would have the Hyundai regional representative call me.

I spoke to Greg Pavlov, the Hyundai regional representative (cell 609 203-9887) twice on June 17, 2005. Mr. Pavlov stated that the Hyundai factory people had told him that the Uniroyal tire I had purchased had a "curb guard" on it which was interfering with the wheel cover, causing it to move on the rims, and slice my valve stems. Mr. Pavlov said nothing about the speed rating. I then asked him what types of tires would be compatible with the wheel covers. He stated that the only tire they could recommend is the Michelin Energy MXV4 that came with the car. He told me if I was still not satisfied to call the Hyundai Consumer Assistance Center (800 633-5151) and open a case. I called there later that day and spoke to Mindy. She took my complaint and gave me a File No. 803190. She told me she would call me back.

On June 21, 2005, I spoke to Mindy. She said she had spoken to the Assistant Manager at Lia Hyundai and there was nothing that could be done for me. She said there was nothing wrong with the wheel covers, and that the tires were the problem. I asked her how anyone was supposed to know what type of tires to buy when the Owners Manual just specified a size. She stated that the only tire they could recommend is the Michelin Energy MXV4 which came on the car. She then said that the only thing they could advise would be for me to go out and buy some replacement after-market wheel covers and see if they worked. When I pressed her about other complaints involving tire valves being cut off on this model, she stated that Hyundai was aware that BF Goodrich tires caused the problem, but they were not aware of a problem with Uniroyal tires.

Since then, I have since attempted to ascertain what reasonably priced tires would work with the wheel covers on my car. I have visited numerous high-volume tire dealers in the Albany area and have yet to find anyone who has ever even heard of wheel covers causing valve stem failure. When I tell the other tire dealers the history, they do not want to get involved. Certainly, no place is going to let me try the tires and return them if they don't work. I did persuade Wal-Mart Tire & Lube Express in Brunswick, New York, to mount one tire, a Goodyear Eagle 205 65/R15, "H" rated, on my car. The wheel cover still contacted the tire in some places. They would not guarantee it would

HYUNDAI

2003 Owner's Manual

SONATA



DRIVING IS BELIEVING

8-2 CONSUMER INFORMATION & REPORTING SAFETY DEFECTS

010002L-AAT VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (VIN)



010002L-AAT

The vehicle identification number (VIN) is the number used in registering your car and in all legal matters pertaining to its ownership, etc. It can be found in three different places on your car:

1. On the bulkhead between the engine and passenger compartments.
2. On the left top side of the instrument panel where it can be seen by looking down through the windshield.
3. On the lower side of the center pillar outer panel.

010001A-AAT Engine Number



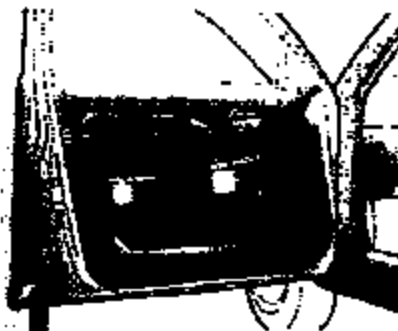
010001A-AAT

The engine number is stamped on the engine block as shown in the drawing.

020001A-AAT TIRE INFORMATION

The tires supplied on your new Hyundai are chosen to provide the best performance for normal driving.

020001Y-AAT RECOMMENDED INFLATION PRESSURES



The tire label located on the driver's door edge gives the tire pressures recommended for your vehicle.

TIRE INFORMATION (PSI)	
FRONT	REAR
230(33)	230(33)

These pressures were chosen to provide a most satisfactory combination of ride comfort, tire wear and stability under normal conditions. Tire pressures should be checked at least monthly. Proper tire inflation pressures should be maintained for those reasons:

- o Lower than recommended tire pressure causes tire wear and poor handling.
- o Higher than recommended tire pressure increases the chance of damage from bumps and causes uneven tread wear.



CAUTION:

Always observe the following:

- o Check pressures when the tires are cool. That is, after the car has been parked for at least three hours and hasn't been driven more than one mile or 1.6 km since starting up.
- o Check the pressure of your spare tire each time you check the pressure of other tires.
- o Never overload your car. Be especially careful about overloading if you equip your car with a luggage rack or car to carrier.

TIRE INFORMATION

The tire information on your vehicle is designed to help you to properly maintain the tires to provide the best performance for your driving.

RECOMMENDED INFLATION PRESSURES



The tire information label on the driver's door edge has the following information: recommended tire pressure.

These pressures were chosen to provide the most satisfactory combination of ride comfort, tire wear and stability under normal conditions. Tire pressures should be checked at least monthly. Proper tire inflation pressures should be maintained for these reasons:

- Lower-than-recommended tire pressures cause uneven tread wear and poor handling.
- Higher-than-recommended tire pressures increase the chance of damage from impacts and cause uneven tread wear.



CAUTION:

Always observe the following:

- Check pressures when the tires are cold. That is, after the car has been parked for at least three hours and hasn't been driven more than one mile or 1.6 km since starting up.
- Check the pressure of your spare tire each time you check the pressure of other tires.
- Never overload your car. Be especially careful about overloading if you equip your car with a luggage rack or car top carrier.

SNOW TIRES

If you equip your car with snow tires, they should be the same size and have the same load capacity as the original tires. Snow tires should be installed on all four wheels; otherwise, poor handling may result. Snow tires should carry 4 psi (28 kPa) more air pressure than the pressure recommended for the standard tires on the tire label on the driver's door edge, or up to the maximum pressure shown on the tire sidewall whichever is less. Do not drive faster than 75 mph (120 km/h) when your car is equipped with snow tires.

TIRE CHAINS

Tire chains, if necessary, should be installed on the front wheels. Be sure that the chains are the proper size and that they are installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. To minimize tire and chain wear, do not continue to use tire chains when they are no longer needed.

TIRE ROTATION



1402-011

Tires should be rotated every 7,000 miles (12,000 km). If you notice that tires are wearing unevenly between rotations, have the car checked by a Hyundai dealer so the cause may be corrected. After rotating, adjust the tire pressures and be sure to check the wheel nut tightness.



8-4 CONSUMER INFORMATION & REPORTING SAFETY DEFECTS

802621A-AAT

TIRE BALANCING

A tire that is out of balance may affect handling and tire wear. The tires on your Hyundai were balanced before the car was delivered but may need balancing again during the years you own the car.

Whenever a tire is dismantled for repair, it should be rebalanced before being reinstalled on the car.

802621A-AAT

TIRE TRACTION

Tire traction can be reduced if you drive on worn tires, tires that are improperly inflated or on slippery road surfaces. Tires should be replaced when tread wear indicators appear. To reduce the possibility of losing control, slow down whenever there is rain, snow or ice on the road.

802621A-AAT

WHEN TO REPLACE TIRES

0.06 in. (1.6 mm)



802621A

The original tires on your car have tread wear indicators. The tread wear indicators appear when the tread depth is 0.06 in. (1.6 mm). The tire should be replaced when these appear as a sign of low tread depth or more grooves in the tread. Always replace your tires with those of the recommended size. If you change the size of the tires, consult the dealer for the correct Hyundai specification.

802621A-AAT

SPARE TIRE AND TOOLS



Your Hyundai is delivered with the following:

- Spare tire and wheel
- Jack
- Wheel nut wrench
- Wrench & Bar

The original tires on your car have tread wear indicators. The tread wear indicators appear when the tread depth is 0.06 in. (1.6 mm). The tire should be replaced when these appear as a solid bar across two or more grooves of the tread. Always replace your tires with those of the recommended size. If you change wheels, the new wheel's rim width and offset must meet Hyundai specification.

1120127-AAT SPARE TIRE AND TOOLS



Your Hyundai is delivered with the following:

- o Spare tire and wheel
- o Jack
- o Wheel nut wrench
- o Wrench Bar

1110401A-AAT SHOP MANUAL

A Hyundai Shop Manual is available from your authorized Hyundai dealer. It's written for professional technicians, but is simple enough for most mechanically-inclined owners to understand.

1120422A-AAT WARRANTIES FOR YOUR HYUNDAI VEHICLE

- o New vehicle 60 Months/60,000 Miles Limited Warranty.
- o New vehicle 120 Months/100,000 Miles Limited Powertrain Warranty (first owner only).
- o Anti-Perforation Limited Warranty
- o Emission Defect Warranty - Federal Vehicle
- o California Emission Control System Warranty (if applicable)
- o Emission Performance Warranty Federal vehicle
- o Replacement Parts and Accessories Limited Warranty

NOTE:
Detailed warranty information is provided in your Hyundai Owner's Handbook.

CONSUMER INFORMATION & REPORTING SAFETY DEFECTS 8-6

1120401A-AAT CONSUMER INFORMATION

This consumer information has been prepared in accordance with regulations issued by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation. It provides the purchaser and/or prospective purchaser of Hyundai automobiles with information on uniform tire quality grading. Your Hyundai dealer will help answer any questions you may have as you read this information.

1120423A-AAT Uniform tire quality grading

Department of Transportation quality grades - All passenger vehicle tires must conform to Federal Safety Standards in addition to these grades. These quality grades are molded on the sidewall.

Treadwear - The tread wear grade is a comparative rating based on the wear rate of the tire when tested under controlled conditions on a specified government test course. For example, a tire graded 150 would wear one and a half (1 - 1/2) times as well on the government course as a tire graded 100. The relative performance of tires depends upon the actual conditions of their use, however, and may depart significantly from the norm due to variations in driving habits, service practices and differences in road characteristics and climate.

B-6 CONSUMER INFORMATION & REPORTING SAFETY DEFECTS

Traction AA, A, B, C - The traction grades, from highest to lowest, are AA, A, B, and C. These grades represent the tire's ability to stop on wet pavement as measured under controlled conditions on specified government test surfaces of asphalt and concrete. A tire marked C may have poor traction performance.

Temperature A, B, C - The temperature grades are A (the highest), B, and C, representing the tire's resistance to the generation of heat and its ability to dissipate heat when tested under controlled conditions on a specified indoor laboratory test wheel. Sustained high temperature can cause the material of the tire to degenerate and reduce tire life, and excessive temperature can lead to sudden tire failure. The grade C corresponds to a level of performance which all passenger car tires must meet under the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 108. Grades B and A represent higher levels of performance on the laboratory test wheel than the minimum required by law.

13320-A-001

Hyundai motor vehicles are designed and manufactured to meet or exceed all applicable safety standards.

For your safety, however, we strongly urge you to read and follow all directions in this Owner's Manual, particularly the information under the headings "NOTE", "CAUTION" and "WARNING".

If, after reading this manual, you have any questions regarding the operation of your vehicle, please contact your nearest Hyundai Motor America Regional Office as listed below:

Eastern Region - Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia.

Eastern Region
1100 Cranbury South River Road
Jamesburg, NJ 08831
(800) 833-5151

Southern Region - Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas.

270 Riverside Parkway, Suite A
Auburn, GA 30168
(800) 833-5151

Central Region - Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin.

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[REDACTED]
TROY, N.Y.
[REDACTED]

June 10, 2005

Hyundai Motor America
Consumer Assistance Center
10550 Talbert Avenue
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

Re: 2003 Hyundai Sonata 6 cyl.
VIN# KMHWF25H33A [REDACTED]

Gentlemen:

I am the owner of the above-referenced vehicle, having purchased the same new on June 30, 2003, from Lia Hyundai in Albany, New York. I am writing to seek your assistance in resolving what I feel to be an outstanding quality and safety issue regarding my car.

The current mileage of my car is approximately 26,530 miles. It has always been serviced at Lia Hyundai. As to the service history, the one (1) noteworthy event is that in December, 2003, at around 7,000 miles, the head gasket failed, causing coolant loss, resulting in engine damage. Hyundai Motor America first decided that the engine should be rebuilt. Once rebuilt, it still leaked so the engine block was ultimately replaced. My vehicle was in the shop for nearly thirty (30) days.

Other than that, my ownership of the vehicle has been without incident. Which brings me to early May of this year, when I noticed that the original tires that came on my car were pretty well worn out. Although they had worn evenly, I was concerned that they would not pass inspection. So I started looking for new tires.

On May 7, 2005, I purchased and had installed four (4) new tires for my 2003 Hyundai Sonata at B.J.'s Wholesale Club in Colonie, New York. The tires were Uniroyal Tiger Paws, size 205/ 65R15, which is the size specified for my car both in the tire catalog at B.J.'s and in my owner's manual.

On 5/27/05, I was driving the car in Troy, New York, when the passenger front tire suddenly went flat. I called Hyundai Roadside Assistance who sent someone to change the tire. The mechanic looked for the hole in the tire but found none. He then pointed out that the tire valve stem had a large hole in it at the base. I drove back to B.J.'s on the spare. B.J.'s replaced the valve stem and put the tire back on my car.

On 6/2/05, while on an entrance ramp to I787 just over the Menands Bridge leaving Troy, New York, that same passenger side front tire suddenly went flat again. This time I was in an extremely dangerous situation, there was only a very narrow shoulder on the ramp and cars going by were barely missing my car. I called Hyundai Roadside Assistance who called 911. The 911 dispatcher sent a "Help" truck operated by the NYS Department of Transportation. That mechanic again put on my spare and again pointed out that the tire valve stem had a hole at its base. I drove back to B.J.'s where they again changed the tire valve. The B.J.'s manager insisted that there was nothing wrong with the tires or valves and suspected that sharp edges on the wheel covers were cutting the valves. After inspecting the other tire valves, they noticed that all of them had marks on them. The technicians dismounted the other three (3) tires and put in new valves. Upon leaving B.J.'s all of the tires were fine, with the wheel covers correctly installed with the tire valves stems not touching the wheel covers in any way. I then drove to my place of work in Albany, New York. Upon arriving there, I noticed that all four wheel covers were now pressing against the tire valve stems, flattening them against the wheel covers. I called B.J.'s who said that the problem was that the wheel covers were moving, not anything to do with the tires. They suggested I call the Hyundai Dealer. I immediately called Lia Hyundai, reported the problem and was told I could not get an appointment until 6/7/05.

On 6/7/05, I took the car to Lia Hyundai. They said that two (2) of the wheel covers were moving on the rims, causing the damage to my valves. They replaced the two (2) wheel covers under warranty. Upon arriving home, I inspected the tires. All of the wheel covers, including the new ones, had moved and were again flattening the valve stems. I called Lia Hyundai who said to bring the car back the next day.

On 6/8/05, I returned to Lia Hyundai and left the car. Late in the day they informed me that they had determined that the tires I purchased stuck out over the rims and pressed against the wheel covers causing them to move. They did agree that the tires were the correct size but claimed they were somehow different than the ones that came with the car. They suggested that I ask B.J.'s to let me return the tires and buy other ones. Acknowledging the unsafe condition, they removed the wheel covers from the car and put them in the trunk before allowing me to drive off. The Service Advisor told me there was nothing more Hyundai would do.

I called B.J.'s and explained the situation. They said it was Hyundai's problem because the tires installed were the size called for in the owner's manual.

So, at this point, I am driving the car without wheel covers. No one wants to take responsibility. I feel I am in a completely impossible position. Even if I buy new tires and throw away four (4) brand new ones in the process, what guarantee do I have that the new tires will not cause the same problem? I have read and re-read my owner's manual and there is no mention of the car needing special tires or that some tires would not work right. The only thing specified is the size, 205/65R15, which is what I bought.

I believe it will ultimately be determined that there the wheel covers on the 2003 Sonatas are defective and improperly designed in that they do not accommodate all tires of the size specified in the Owner's Manual. The NHTSA Office of Defects Investigation has received two (2) other,

identical complaints involving the 2003 Sonata. In both cases, just as in mine, there were repeated incidents of the wheel covers cutting through the tire valve stems. One incident occurred on November 9, 2004, and the other on March 28, 2005. The time is now coming that the tires on all of the 2003 Sonatas will be need to be replaced. I'm sure you can expect a lot more incidents like this, because there is apparently no way of knowing what particular 205/65R15 tires will and will not work on this vehicle. I provided the Service Manager at Lia Hyundai, Jim Maguire, with copies of the prior, identical complaints received by the NHTSA. When I spoke to him he told me he was going to share them with a representative from Hyundai Motor America and see what could be done. My last conversation with Mr. Maguire was late in the afternoon on June 8, 2005. At that time, he told me he was still discussing the matter with the Hyundai representative and would personally get back to me with the result. I am still waiting for that call.

Needless to say, based upon this latest incident, and coupled with the earlier situation involving the engine replacement, I am extremely dissatisfied with the vehicle and with Hyundai's approach to customer satisfaction. This vehicle was the primary transportation for me and my family and now I am afraid to use it for fear that there will be a catastrophic tire failure causing an accident.

As to what I am looking for, there are any number of things Hyundai Motor America and/or Lia Hyundai can do to at least ameliorate the situation. Since I purchased the new tires in good faith, based upon the information provided in the Owner's Manual, I do not see why I should be stuck with four (4) new tires that I cannot use. I feel that Hyundai should provide me with four (4) new OEM tires. I'm sure the dealer can find a used car on its lot that can use my tires. Alternatively, Hyundai could modify my wheel covers so that they do not improperly contact the tires. Or, Hyundai could provide me with another style or type of wheel cover that does not improperly contact the tires. Truthfully, I am willing to consider any solution that will enable me to regain confidence in the safety and reliability of the car.

For your information, I am enclosing documentation of my tire purchase, the valve stem repairs, the Lia Hyundai service visits, and the NHTSA information.

If you are serious about your commitment to customer satisfaction, I urge you to take a hard look at whether I am being treated fairly here. If you wish to discuss this matter, I can be reached weekdays at [REDACTED] and any other time at [REDACTED]

Thank you for your anticipated courtesy and consideration.

Very truly yours,

[REDACTED]

Injuries: 0

ODI ID Number : 10111680

Date of Failure:
November 9, 2004

VIN : KMHWF25[REDACTED]

Component: WHEELS:CAP/COVER/HUB

Summary:

SOMETHING IS CUTTING THE STEM AND THE TIRE AROUND THE STEM AREA. TWICE THE DEALER REPLACED THE TIRE AND THEY ARE UNABLE TO LOCATE THE CAUSE. THE PROBLEM IS STILL RECURRING. THE DEALER HAS PASSED THIS INFORMATION OVER TO THE MANUFACTURER. *NM THE CONSUMER INDICATED THA THE HUB CAP CUT THE TIRE AND VALVE STEM. HERE HAS BEEN 3 STEMS CUT ALL ON THE FRONT TIRES. *BF *NM

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Make : HYUNDAI

Model :
SONATA

Year : 2003

Manufacturer : HYUNDAI MOTOR
COMPANY

Crash : No

Fire : No

Number of
Injuries: 0

ODI ID Number : 10123910

Date of Failure:
March 28, 2005

VIN : KMHWF25[REDACTED]

Component: TIRES:VALVE

Summary:

ON 03/26/05, I PURCHASED BF GOODRICH TOURING T/A PRO SERIES (SIZE P205/65R15) FOR MY 2003 SONATA AT SAM'S CLUB. IN A MONTH AND A HALF, I HAD 4 FLAT TIRES AND 10 VALVES REPLACED BECAUSE THE HUB CAPS SPIN AND SLICE THE VALVES. I LOST 7.5 HOURS OF WORK AND RECEIVED A BACK INJURY WHILE TRYING TO CHANGE ONE OF THE TIRES. I'VE SPOKEN TO HYUNDAI AND BF GOODRICH - BOTH OF WHICH SUGGESTED GETTING THE H RATED TIRES INSTEAD OF THE S RATED. I DID THAT, BUT IT DIDN'T WORK. I ALSO PAID \$75 FOR A DIAGNOSTICIAN TO TELL ME THAT I HAD THE WRONG BEAD ON THE TIRES BUT WHOM COULDN'T SUGGEST A SOLUTION. MY OWNER'S MANUAL SIMPLY STATES, "ALWAYS REPLACE YOUR TIRES WITH THOSE OF THE RECOMMENDED SIZE" LISTS THE TIRE SIZE SPECIFICATIONS AS P 205/65R15. THERE IS NO RECOMMENDED REPLACEMENT BRAND NAMED AND NO MENTION ABOUT HAVING THE CORRECT SIZE BEADING. I TOOK MY CAR TO ANOTHER DEALER AND LEARNED THAT THE BF GOODRICH TIRES HAVE A BEAD PROTECTANT WHICH CAUSE THE HUB CAPS TO REST DIRECTLY AGAINST MY TIRES THUS CAUSING THEM TO SPIN. THERE SHOULD BE A GAP BETWEEN THE HUBCAP AND TIRE. I SWITCHED TO A GOODYEAR TIRE AND HAVE NOT HAD PROBLEMS SINCE. THE PROBLEM WITH SLICING VALVE STEMS ONLY OCCURS ON THE 15 INCHES TIRES WITH HUBCAPS (AS OPPOSED TO THE 16 INCHES TIRES ON ALUMINUM WHEELS.)

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SEARCH TYPE : VEHICLE

YEAR : 2003

Make : HYUNDAI

Model : SONATA

Type : PASSENGER CAR

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Results : 3 | All records displayed

Make : HYUNDAI Model : SONATA Year : 2003

Manufacturer : HYUNDAI MOTOR COMPANY

Crash : Yes Fire : No Number of Injuries: 1

ODI ID Number : 10103087 Date of Failure: December 1, 2004

VIN : KMHWF3

Component: AIR BAGS:FRONTAL

Summary:

WHILE DRIVING 55 MPH CONSUMER'S VEHICLE COLLIDED WITH THE VEHICLE IN FRONT. UPON IMPACT, BOTH FRONTAL AIR BAGS FAILED TO DEPLOY. DRIVER SUSTAINED MAJOR INJURIES, AND WAS TRANSPORTED TO A HOSPITAL BY THE PRENTS. VEHICLE WAS TOWED TO A GARAGE FOR INSPECTION. *AK.....THE WHOLE DASHBOARD CAME FORWARD AND EVERYTHING INSIDE VEHICLE BROKE, AND AIR BAGS DID NOT DEPLOY. CONSUMER'S SON COMPLAINED OF BACK/LEG, AND ARM INJURIES, WAS TAKEN TO A HOSPITAL. *AK

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Make : HYUNDAI Model : SONATA Year : 2003

Manufacturer : HYUNDAI MOTOR COMPANY

Crash : No Fire : No Number of