

Palmdale, CA

Telephone:

10131732

8 22 11 3 07

add to
10131732

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Office of Defects Investigation
NVS-210, 400 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

August 5, 2005

Re: NHTSA ODI# 10131732 for my 2002 Chrysler PT Cruiser, VIN# 3C8FY68B72T

Dear Sir or Madame:

I am filing a complaint with your organization regarding my 2002 Chrysler PT Cruiser however, your website would not permit me to include the entire contents of my letter. Therefore, I am submitting it via mail to you along with all supporting documentation. The details of my complaint are discussed in the attached letter and supporting documentation, which I also sent to Chrysler. Please review the attachments for all the details. Please respond as soon as possible and assist in any way you can.

Thank you for your time and efforts.

Sincerely,

Anamari
8/29/05

VOQ Confirmation

Your Complaint Information is successfully submitted.

Your Confirmation number (ODI Number) is: 10131732

Your Complaint Information

Consumer Information

Name : [REDACTED]
Org. Name : [REDACTED]
Address : [REDACTED]
City, State, Zip : Palmdale, CA [REDACTED]
USA
Daytime Phone : [REDACTED] Ext :
Evening Phone : [REDACTED] Fax :
Email : [REDACTED]

[top](#)

Complaint Information

Description : Hello. I tried copying and pasting my letter into this box however, my letter is too long. Therefore, I am completing this online form and then will mail in my entire letter, documentation and the like to your mailing address along with a copy of this online form. The complaint is regarding my 2002 Chrysler PT Cruiser, VIN# 3C8FY68B7ZT [REDACTED] and it is relating to the fact Chrysler refuses to repair my vehicle under the current and active NHTSA recall # 01V288000 (Instrument Cluster Problem). Today, 8/5/05 I will mail my letter detailing the entire problem but I am submitting this portion online to get the process started. Thank you for your time and attention. Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Incident Date : 4/2/2005 Fire : Yes
Num. Failures : 1 Property Damage : No
Num. Deaths : 0 Crash : No
Num. Injured : 0 Police Report : No
Referral Source : INTERNET

[top](#)

Vehicle Information

VIN : 3C8FY68B7ZT [REDACTED] Purchase Date : 4/18/2002
Manufacturer : DAIMLERCHRYSLER CORPORATION
Year, Make and Model : 2002/CHRYSLER/PT CRUISER Original Owner : Yes
of Cylinders : 4 Trans. Type : AUTOMATIC
Engine Size : 2.4 Liter VehicleDetails Usage :

Cruise Control :	Yes	Antilock Brakes :	No
Current Mileage :	99656	Speed :	65
Failure Mileage :	92500	Powertrain :	FRONT WHEEL DRIVE
Body Style :	STATIONWAGON	Fuel System :	FUEL INJECTION
Fuel Type :	GAS	Vehicle Type :	MULTIPURPOSE PASSENGER VEHICLE

Vehicle Component Information

Component 1:	ELECTRICAL SYSTEM:WIRING:INTERIOR/UNDER DASH	OEM:	Yes
Component 2:	INTERIOR LIGHTING	OEM:	Yes

Vehicle Dealer Information

# Dealer :	1		
Name :	H.W. Hunter Inc - Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge	Dealer Type :	SERVICE DEALER
Address :	1130 Auto Mall Drive Lancaster CA 93534		
Dealer Phone:	661-948-8411	Dealer Fax:	
Email:			

[REDACTED]
Palmdale, CA [REDACTED]

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Dr. Dieter Zetsche, CEO
Daimler Chrysler
P.O. Box 218004
Auburn Hills, MI 48321-8004

August 5, 2005

Re: My 2002 Chrysler PT Cruiser, VIN # 3C8FY68B721 [REDACTED]

Dear Dr. Zetsche:

I own a 2002 Chrysler PT Cruiser Limited Edition, VIN # 3C8FY68B721 [REDACTED]. This is my first Chrysler product I have ever owned. I maintain my vehicle above and beyond factory specifications / requirements (i.e. I do oil changes sooner than required, I always use Mobil 1 Synthetic and Mobil 1 Oil Filter, I had my transmission fluid and coolant all flushed and replaced within factory recommendations, etc). My most recent vehicle service was at H.W. Hunter, Inc. Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge located at 1130 Auto Mall Drive, Lancaster, CA 93534. At the time of this service on April 4, 2005 I had 92,529 miles on my vehicle. Although my vehicle is out of the 3-year 36,000 mile bumper-to-bumper warranty, it was still within the 7-year 100,000-mile limited powertrain warranty.

I have never been happy with the service of H.W. Hunter Chrysler, however they are the only local dealership within any reasonable distance. In fact, one time I actually drove my vehicle 75 miles south to Westoaks Chrysler in Thousand Oaks, CA strictly to obtain better service. I only brought my vehicle back to H.W. Hunter out of convenience and hoping that my prior experiences were just strokes of bad luck. My most recent service with H.W. Hunter Chrysler was April 4, 2005. Among the vehicle repairs to be addressed when I brought it in on 04/04/05 were: the power steering recall, a transmission leak which was causing my car to shift out of gear on its own, a replacement of one front passenger fog light bulb which had burst, and a safety/electrical issue with the instrument cluster.

The power steering recall was completed just fine. I was advised by Ozzie Quinones, Service Advisor at H.W. Hunter Chrysler, that my transmission leak was covered by the 7 year 100,000 mile limited powertrain warranty and that there would be a \$100.00 deductible for it. As such I agreed to the repair on those terms. I was told that two fog lights were ordered for repair, and I again advised that the repair order only requires one fog light for the front passenger side since the driver's side did not need to be replaced and was working properly. As such one fog light was repaired. I am not sure why they tried to sell me on servicing two fog lights when only one needed repair.

After the transmission repair had been completed, Mr. Quinones telephoned me at work and now advised me that the transmission repair was not covered under the limited powertrain warranty and I would have to pay the more than \$500.00 for the repair. I was appalled at this inconsistency. I was first

advised that it was covered, agreed to the repair with paying the \$100 deductible and now after the repair was completed, I was advised that it was really not covered because it involved a solenoid repair, which was not covered by the warranty. After arguing back and forth, the dealership finally agreed to stand by our initial agreement and cover the repair under warranty and I was charged the \$100.00 deductible as initially agreed.

The final area of concern was the safety/electrical issue. Prior to bringing my vehicle in for service, while I was driving with my girlfriend on the highway, all of a sudden we heard a pop caused by a spark within my dashboard above where the speedometer is (also known as the instrument cluster). We then immediately smelled a burning smell and then white smoke came billowing out of the instrument cluster while I was still driving on the highway! I had to pull off the highway. Luckily the pop, spark and subsequent burning did not affect the engine however, since then, none of instrument cluster (like the lights on all of the gauges, lights on the center console and lights on the shift lever area) is working; although the overhead lights on the headliner do work properly. I asked the dealership to diagnose it. They notified me that the instrument cluster "circuit board was burned" (see the attached repair order for reference to this quote) and I would need a brand new instrument cluster. I was charged \$81.00 for the diagnosis of the problem but if I wished to pay the more than \$600.00 to repair the instrument cluster, then that \$81.00 would be applied to the repair. Otherwise, I am out \$81.00 for the diagnosis if I do not do the repair with their dealership.

I was unwilling to pay for this repair since the manufacturer should cover it because it is a safety issue. Also I did not feel it was fair to be charged \$81.00 for a repair that should be covered by the manufacturer. To have a spark or fire ignite in the vehicle, and while driving nonetheless, is a huge safety concern that no vehicle of any type should ever be expected to have; especially considering that my vehicle is only three years old, regardless of how many miles it has on it..

I discussed it with Mr. Quionones who said I should contact Chrysler Customer Service directly because the dealership refused to do the repair under any warranty. Before calling Chrysler I did some further research on the PT Cruiser forums and clubs of which I am an active member. I found that Chrysler had a recall for the instrument clusters in approximately 43,000 2002 PT Cruisers. As you may be aware, the recall number assigned to this by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's is 01V288000 and the recall date was 9/20/2001. A copy of the recall is attached. The recall reads as follows:

VEHICLE PROBLEM:

CERTAIN SPORT UTILITY VEHICLES ARE BEING RECALLED FOR A SOFTWARE ERROR IN THE INSTRUMENT CLUSTER MICROPROCESSOR. UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, THE CLUSTER, WITH THE MAJORITY OF ITS GAUGES, ILLUMINATION, AND WARNING LAMPS, COULD BECOME INOPERATIVE.

CONSEQUENCE:

DRIVING THE VEHICLE WITH AN INOPERATIVE CLUSTER COULD CAUSE A DISTRACTION, INCREASING THE RISK OF A CRASH. DEALERS WILL RE-FLASH THE CLUSTER SOFTWARE TO CORRECT THE CONDITION. OWNER NOTIFICATION BEGAN OCTOBER 8, 2001. OWNERS WHO TAKE THEIR VEHICLES TO AN AUTHORIZED DEALER ON AN AGREED UPON SERVICE DATE AND DO NOT RECEIVE THE FREE REMEDY WITHIN A REASONABLE TIME SHOULD CONTACT DAIMLERCHRYSLER AT 1-800-853-1403.

Although I was never notified of this recall, and although my 2002 PT Cruiser may not have originally been considered to be one of these 43,000 2002 PT Cruisers recalled for the same problem, the fact that my vehicle exhibited the same problem as cited in the recall (i.e. instrument cluster becoming inoperative) and moreover, my instrument cluster ignited a spark which resulted in smoke, means that my vehicle should have either been recalled along with those other 43,000 PT Cruisers, or my vehicle should at least now be covered by the recall.

I then called Chrysler on April 6, 2005 and File # 13394882 was opened. I explained to Chrysler what the problem was. I advised them what I thought was a fair solution based on the fact that what happened to my vehicle was a safety issue that any manufacturer should cover, especially when there is an existing recall for that issue for other cars of my same year, make and model. Chrysler refused to cover the repair or refund my \$81.00 diagnosis charge from H.W. Hunter Chrysler, citing my high mileage as the reason for it not being covered. In my opinion, mileage nor three years of age is not a factor in the instrument cluster going out, nor is it a factor in what caused the spark, smoke and subsequent "burning" of the instrument cluster circuit board. Moreover, the servicing dealership did not cite mileage or age as being factor in the instrument cluster circuit board "burning," so I am not sure how a Chrysler Customer Service Representative on the telephone and one who has never seen the car, can make this determination that mileage is the reason for it not being covered when the safety issue is not related to mileage at all, and neither is the active recall. Moreover, my high mileage is simply an excuse for Chrysler not to cover this safety electrical issue; an issue for which Chrysler has already serviced or is servicing other 2002 PT Cruisers with my same problem, and they are servicing the problem for free based on this recall.

After Chrysler's refusal to properly and fairly service their customer and cover this instrument cluster repair and recall, I then tried explaining all of this to the Service Manager at H.W. Hunter Chrysler, Roy Cook. I explained to him all about the safety issue and recall issue however, he stated that once Chrysler refuses to cover the repair there is nothing his dealership can do. On top of that, I was still being charged the \$81.00 for the diagnoses of the instrument cluster problem. The only thing the dealership was willing to do was to give me \$100 off the repair of the instrument cluster; but again this is still not fair considering it is a safety issue for which there is already an active recall. I did not agree to the repair of the instrument cluster and instead picked up my vehicle from the H.W. Hunter Chrysler with all the other repairs completed except for that burnt instrument cluster.

H.W. Hunter Chrysler had my vehicle from 4/5/05 to 4/8/05 (4 days). During that time my vehicle had been parked outside each night as most other vehicles were. It rained during the week H.W. Hunter Chrysler had my vehicle. Upon my car being returned to me, it was completely soiled in dirt from the rains and winds we had. My vehicle was not even washed for me after such a long period of time of being at the dealership. Additionally, there were two large oily handprints from the repair technician on the top of my dashboard directly above the instrument cluster. I was so disgusted with everything and I had been without my vehicle for so long, that I did not say a word and just drove home.

The following morning, I popped my hood to check my fluid levels. Unbelievably I noticed that inside the engine bay there was a very long black (approximately 18-inch) screwdriver left there by the repair technician!! I was appalled that such a safety hazard was left inside my engine bay. Luckily I am not aware of it causing any damage to my engine. Additionally, I noticed that my OEM black fabric battery insulator was all torn up in several places. That must have been caused by the dealership pressure washing my engine to clean up the leaking solenoid.

After work that day I drove to the dealership. The Advisor gave me a new battery insulator free of charge (it is only a \$2.00 part anyhow); although the battery insulator given to me is still not the same OEM battery insulator that originally came with my vehicle. The battery insulator I was given is now a cheap flexible plastic whereas the OEM battery insulator that originally came with my vehicle was a nice fabric.

I told this to Mr. Quinones and he said that was all they carried for my vehicle. I was just happy to have a new one and left it as is, even though I still preferred my original batter insulator.

Then I spoke with Service Manager, Roy Cook again. I showed him the screwdriver and explained to him what happened. He acknowledged that the screwdriver belonged to his service department. I explained to him the following: considering all the problems and poor service I had with his dealership and Daimler Chrysler, not to mention the safety hazard of the circuit board being "burned," as well as the inconvenience his dealership had caused me by leaving their screwdriver inside my engine, as well as their tearing up of my battery insulator, and considering there is still an outstanding safety repair that we know should be covered by Chrysler with regards to the instrument cluster, I asked him what he could do for me as the customer to keep my business and earn future business? He just simply apologized for the screwdriver and said there is nothing that he could do except give me the \$100.00 discount on the instrument cluster repair, bringing the total for that particular repair to still more than \$500.00. I was so disgusted with his poor service, disgusted with the overall service and quality of workmanship at H.W. Hunter Chrysler, disgusted at his poor foresight about keeping business and earning future business, that I just left without getting the expensive instrument cluster repair done. I watched him as he walked back to the technicians to return the screwdriver.

The very next day as I was driving my vehicle, I noticed that it was running oddly at idle. I checked inside the engine bay again and found that my air intake tube had not been attached back onto the throttle body. The air intake tube was just put on without the screws being tightened. The dealership did not even properly reinstall it after they detached it to complete either the repairs or the engine wash. I was even more disgusted at this poor workmanship and complete lack of care by the dealership for safety and quality of work. I did not even bother going back to the H.W. Hunter Chrysler because if a screwdriver inside the engine bay got nothing more than a verbal apology from them, I was sure that telling them about this throttle body mishap would be of no consequence to them either.

As if all that were not enough, when I went to wash my vehicle that weekend (since the dealership left it so soiled) I noticed that although the passenger fog light was repaired, there were still *many* remnants (or should I say chunks) of glass still left inside the fog light area from where the old bulb had cracked or burst. H.W. Hunter Chrysler did not even clean out the fog light area before installing the new bulb. UNBELIEVABLE is all I can say!!! The glass bulb remnants still remain to this day and I still drive with a non-working burnt instrument cluster!!

I am not sure where H.W. Hunter Chrysler's priorities are, or for that matter where the priorities are for Daimler Chrysler as a whole. The priorities are obviously not about serving the customer and/or earning current and future business; that message was made clear to me in my discussion with both H.W. Hunter Chrysler as well as with Chrysler Customer Service when I filed my complaint. After all the problems I have had with H.W. Hunter Chrysler, after all its mistakes and shoddy workmanship (i.e. leaving a large screwdriver in my engine bay, not connecting the air intake to the throttle body, leaving broken glass inside the fog light, tearing up my battery insulator, oily hand prints on my dash, not washing my vehicle, etc.) it would only seem fair, logical and the only right thing to do to at least attempt to remedy the poor service and poor workmanship issues by completing my instrument cluster repair free of charge and refund my \$81.00 which I paid to have it diagnosed. Whether using the recall as the basis for the free repair or just fair customer service and the prospect of earning future business, either one is sufficient to justify the free repair, or both together make it an overwhelming case for the free repair.

Obviously my vehicle has a lot of miles on it. I intend on keeping my PT Cruiser until it reaches its mileage limit whenever that may be. I love my PT and have always said to myself that I will in fact buy another one once this one runs its life span. I really like the new look and style of the new 2006 PT Cruiser. However, I am now thinking twice about whether I would ever buy another PT Cruiser, or for

that matter, any other Chrysler product. If this is the level of service and workmanship to be expected at a Chrysler dealership, a Five-Star Dealership nonetheless, and if calling Chrysler Customer Service and reporting a safety electrical issue (of which there is already an existing recall) does not result in a proper remedy to the problem, then I guess I have already answered my question - that I would not buy another Chrysler product. And one can bet that I will continue to share my unhappiness with this Chrysler dealership and with Daimler Chrysler as a whole to everyone I come in contact with. My girlfriend who drives a Mercedes C230 is considering the purchase of a new vehicle. She has been considering the purchase of Chrysler Crossfire or Chrysler 300, while my brother-in-law is in search of a new car and has been considering either either a PT Cruiser or the new Chevrolet HHR. One can be sure that I will share my disappointments with them about Chrysler and about this dealership to keep them from buying any Chrysler product, especially from this dealership, and to look elsewhere at other car manufactures instead. You know what they say about the power of word of mouth. The fair and simple remedy is to fix my burnt instrument cluster free of charge by replacing it with a brand new cluster and refunding my \$81.00 that I had to pay to diagnose this problem.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Cordially,



Attachments: Work Repair Order From H.W. Hunter Chrysler and the Recall Notice From NHTSA

CC: National Highway Traffic And Safety Administration (Complaint/ODI # 10131732)
Bureau Of Regulatory Services, Michigan Department of State
Department Of Consumer Affairs: California Bureau of Automotive Repair
The Center For Automotive Safety
Better Business Bureau of Detroit and Eastern Michigan
Better Business Bureau of California
Consumer Reports
Los Angeles Times
Antelope Valley Press
Detroit Free Press
The Detroit News
The Daily Oakland Press (Michigan)

Recalls - Search Results

Report Date : August 5, 2005 at 03:10 PM

NHTSA Campaign ID number : 01V288000

Make / Models :

CHRYSLER / PT CRUISER
JEEP / GRAND CHEROKEE

Model/Build Years:

2002
2002

Manufacturer : DAIMLERCHRYSLER CORPORATION

NHTSA CAMPAIGN ID Number : 01V288000 **Recall Date :** SEP 06, 2001

Component: ELECTRICAL SYSTEM:WIRING:INTERIOR/UNDER DASH

Potential Number Of Units Affected : 43000

Summary:

VEHICLE DESCRIPTION: CERTAIN SPORT UTILITY VEHICLES ARE BEING RECALLED FOR A SOFTWARE ERROR IN THE INSTRUMENT CLUSTER MICROPROCESSOR. UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, THE CLUSTER, WITH THE MAJORITY OF ITS GAUGES, ILLUMINATION, AND WARNING LAMPS, COULD BECOME INOPERATIVE.

Consequence:

DRIVING THE VEHICLE WITH AN INOPERATIVE CLUSTER COULD CAUSE A DISTRACTION, INCREASING THE RISK OF A CRASH.

Remedy:

DEALERS WILL RE-FLASH THE CLUSTER SOFTWARE TO CORRECT THE CONDITION. OWNER NOTIFICATION BEGAN OCTOBER 8, 2001. OWNERS WHO TAKE THEIR VEHICLES TO AN AUTHORIZED DEALER ON AN AGREED UPON SERVICE DATE AND DO NOT RECEIVE THE FREE REMEDY WITHIN A REASONABLE TIME SHOULD CONTACT DAIMLERCHRYSLER AT 1-800-853-1403.

Notes:

ALSO CONTACT THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION'S AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE AT 1-888-DASH-2-DOT (1-888-327-4236).

**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).**