

10148630

2006 JAN 10 PM 2: 58

[REDACTED]
Berkeley, CA
December 28, 2005

National Highway Safety Administration
400 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Highway Safety Administrators:

I have received no response to the enclosed letter to Lexus regarding the breakdown of the transmission therein described. This having been a very dangerous event, I believe that you should be informed – on the possibility that this occurs with some frequency. Indeed, if you have a record of the number or frequency of such breakdowns in Lexus cars, I would be pleased to receive it without having to appeal to the Freedom of Information Act.

Please advise.

Sincerely yours,

[REDACTED]

E. Edison

Berkeley, CA
October 18, 2005

Mr. Bob Carter
General Manager, Lexus Division
19001 Southwestern Avenue
Torrance, CA 90509

Dear Mr. Carter:

My wife owns a 2000 Lexus ES300. The car has been regularly serviced at the indicated intervals and in all indicated ways. It had about 87,000 miles on it when the incident reported below occurred.

We were about 60 miles out of Berkeley, where we live, driving east on Highway 80 at a speed of 65-70 mph when I noticed that I was losing speed. I pressed on the accelerator and got negligible response but the tachometer was swinging wildly. This being a very busy freeway, I moved over to get in the break-down lane, but without power this was not easy. Huge trucks were bearing down on us with horns blaring. I managed to get the car into the break-down lane, but I hope that we will never again undergo such an experience. This was an extremely dangerous event. Lest you think otherwise (no one else in your organization concedes such concerns), I repeat: **this was an extremely dangerous experience.**

We were towed back to Berkeley. Initial checks of the transmission fluid revealed no burning odor or grit, but upon taking the pan down I was advised that the transmission would need to be replaced. Being reluctant to have a rebuilt transmission put into a luxury car, even with multi-year warranties, I made arrangements to tow the car to Lexus in San Rafael. I neglected to inquire about the warranty on new Lexus transmissions.

Since my wife and I were on our way to our summer home in Wisconsin and had company arriving the first weekend, we transferred all of our gear to our Prius and drove off to Wisconsin. Upon returning from travel, I inspected the Lexus bill (for \$3962.90), which I authorized them to bill to my credit card, and did not find mention of a warranty. I therefore called Serena Coles and was told that the warranty was for 12 months or 12,000 miles.

I was incredulous. Having driven cars (most of which are believed to be of lesser quality than Lexus) for 57 years and never having had a single one that had a major parts repair – much less a transmission break-down – I could not and cannot believe that this is the best that Lexus can do. This is a car that should go 200,000 miles without a transmission replacement.

Serena said that San Rafael Lexus had no authority to do better and gave me 1-800-25-LEXUS to call. I did. Same result. I subsequently received a letter from Laura Heyns advising me that "It is our number one priority to provide unsurpassed customer service" and asking me to call 1-800-255-3987.

I have never been able to make contact with Laura, so I explained the above to another person (I did not get her name). I was told what Serena told me: The Lexus replacement warranty is 12 months or 12,000 miles.

I inquired about Lexus experience with transmission break-downs and was told that this was confidential information. Maybe the time has come to make this public?

My view: 12 months or 12,000 miles is OK if I need to replace a headlight or mirror. But this is the transmission! My wife and I were exposed to serious danger. Lexus has no confidence in its replacement transmission? Lexus has no sense of responsibility? The "number one priority" at Lexus is just rubbish?

Hoping that someone at your level has the authority to offer a respectable warranty for a parts replacement that never should have had to be made - in any classy car, much less a Lexus.

Hoping to hear from you with a better result.

Sincerely yours,

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.