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February 2, 2006

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
Washington, DC 20590

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to inform you of a dangerous design defect in the wheel covers of the 2003 Hyundai Sonata. This problem occurred not only in my own car but I am also aware of several other Sonata owners that have experienced the same problem. I have correspondence from these other owners who have also had flat tires. One woman had a flat going 35 mph and is happy to have survived.

I had 2 flat tires in April/May 2005 due to the wheel covers rotating and cutting or piercing the valve stems. In addition, another wheel cover had rotated over the valve stem and was starting to pierce. The service department at Voss Hyundai in Dayton, OH, tried to repair the wheel covers and then replaced the wheel covers after several weeks, putting me back on the road and telling me that this would not happen again. The problem was blamed on negligence wheel cover replacement by Tire Discounters (who sold me my new tires) and Mark in Voss' service department reassured me that I was in no danger subsequently since Hyundai had replaced the covers.

I had a third flat in August. Mark told me to bring the car in. I had it towed to the service shop within an hour and a half. When I got there Mark said I would have to leave the car overnight because the shop had a power outage. I asked for a loaner car. Mark said that he couldn't do that. I asked for a discount on rims and he told me that too would not be possible. I had to hitch a ride back to work with the tow truck driver and then get a co-worker to go out of her way to drive me for a rental car. At that time, Mark said that there was another car with the same problem and he wasn't sure if it was mine or the other one that they had tried to repair using duct tape. Does Hyundai advocate making repairs to wheels made with duct tape? Is this the kind of customer service implied by Hyundai's publicized warranty?

I contacted Mr. Voss, owner of Voss Hyundai while my car was in the Hyundai service center on August 10, 2005 after leaving messages for Dick Lang, a manager. Mr. Voss referred me back to Dan Coombs, another manager, for whom I left a message and to Jeff Tarzinsky, yet another manager. Jeff took information from me, saying that he would forward the information to Dan Coombs. I never received a call back. I left my car in the shop waiting for appropriate resolution that would keep me out of future danger. I left another message for Jeff at that time saying that I would not drive my car with wheel covers again and, again, requested a permanent solution to this problem such

*M. Lang
2/12/06*

as wheel replacement. With those wheel covers, I had constant concern about blowouts or being stranded. After a week of non-response, I took my car to Tire Discounters to have rims installed.

The vehicle that was sold to me in 2003 does not accommodate replacement tires. Voss Hyundai, in fact, told me that I should have replaced the tires only with the Michelin brand of tire. Nowhere in the owners' manual does it state that the tires must be Michelin. How would a consumer know this requirement AND is it reasonable to limit a consumer to a certain brand of tire when several brands come in the correct size?

After complaining to the Hyundai national service department, I was offered a reimbursement of my rental car and half of the cost of the replacement rims. Hyundai should have to correct this problem on all its cars before someone has a flat at a high speed and is killed. They should be required to pay all expenses to individuals incurred as a result of their poor design.

Sincerely,

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