

OCT 12 2006

NVS-211sc/mec
Ref. No. 10168966

Solon, OH

Dear

This responds to your report to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) received on September 22 concerning your model year (MY) 2001 Toyota Camry that caught fire while you were driving it on a highway.

On October 1, [REDACTED], Safety Defect Engineer, of my staff contacted you. You mentioned that you and your child had suffered smoke inhalation, nervousness, and headache as a result of the fire incident. You indicated that Toyota Corporation had inspected your damaged vehicle and informed you that an engine piston/connecting rod had broken; however, they denied any responsibility for it or for the fire. You also said that you had received a letter from Toyota Motor Sales, USA Inc., regarding a Special Policy Adjustment (SPA) related to engine "sludge", that your research on the internet found many Toyota vehicle owners have experienced engine sludge related problems, and that you believe the fire incident with your vehicle was the result of engine breakage due to the engine sludge. Furthermore, you indicated that a local Toyota dealer had performed all the scheduled maintenance on your vehicle until it had logged about 30,000 miles.

As you are already aware, in February 2002, Toyota initiated a SPA designed to provide assistance to consumers who have experienced engine problems related to "oil gelling" or "sludge" on MY 1996 to 2000 Toyota Avalon, Camry, Celica, ES300, Highlander, RX300, Sienna, and Solara vehicles. In April 2004, Toyota expanded the SPA to include certain MY 2001 and 2002 vehicles. Your vehicle was included in this expanded coverage.

In April, 2002, in response to a defect petition from another consumer, the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) of NHTSA examined (DP02-004) alleged engine seizing due to "oil gelling" or "sludge" in MY 1996 to 2000 Toyota Avalon, Camry, Celica, ES300, Highlander, RX300, Sienna, and Solara vehicles. NHTSA denied that petition, concluding that it was unlikely that the agency would issue an order for notification and remedy of this concern at the conclusion of the requested investigation.

In October, 2002, ODI opened an investigation (PE02-079) into alleged engine compartment fires in MY 1997-2002 Toyota Camry vehicles. ODI found the fires rates to be consistently low and evenly distributed among six model years and six different engine configurations. ODI examined a variety of root causes, those being detonation (resulting in oil pan puncture from connecting rod), various fuel related fires, leaking oil filters, wiring issues, improper repairs and brake fluid leaks. None of the issues examined had reports that indicated a safety defect trend when normalized for vehicle population and time exposure. Subsequent complaint data support that conclusion.

For your information, the resumes for the aforementioned investigations are enclosed.

Lastly, a review of NHTSA's database shows that there was only one other similar fire complaint on the MY 2001 Toyota Camry. NHTSA received that complaint in July of 2003. With a population 353,159 units and service time of five years, the number of fire incidents occurring as a result of engine failure while driving for MY 2001 Toyota Camry vehicles is extremely low.

Thank you for bringing the issues to our attention. However, for the foregoing reasons, further expenditure of the agency's investigative resources on the issue you raised does not appear to be warranted at this time. The information you provided will be entered into our database. It will be considered with other reports to identify any safety defect trends that may require our attention.

I hope this information is helpful. If further assistance is needed, please contact
[REDACTED] Chief, Defect Assessment Division, Office of Defects Investigation, at
[REDACTED]

Sincerely,



Kathleen C. DeMeter, Director
Office of Defects Investigation
Enforcement

Enclosures

NHTSA: NVS-210: Petition Response
NVS-211: Steve Chan
NHTSA Control No.
ODI Control No. 10168966
Draft: sc 10/04/06, redraft mec 10/04/06, redraft 10/11/06

Revised:

Final: 10/12/06

cc:

NVS-211, NVS-200, NVS-216

Subject/Chron/Optical Disk/CRD

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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 100148

Date Received

22-SEP-2006

Repository ☐

Reference No.
10168966

11009

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name

Address

City

SOLOM

State

OH

Zip Code

Daytime Telephone Number

E-mail Address

Evening Telephone Number

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

Signature of Owner

Date

VEHICLE INFORMATION

17 digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side

4T1BG28K71L

Make

TOYOTA

Model

CAMRY

Model Year

2001

Date Purchased

Dealer's Name and Telephone Number
TOYOTA OF BEDFORD OH 440-439-8600

Engine:

No: Cylinders 4

Fuel Type:

Gas

Original Owner

☒

Dealer's City

BEDFORD

State

00

Zip Code

44146

Transmission Type

☒

AUTOMATIC

☒ Antilock Brakes

☒ Cruise Control

Powertrain

FRONT WHEEL DRIVE

Vehicle Component Code

061000 ENGINE AND ENGINE COOLING:ENGINE

Multiple Failure: 1

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s)
26-AUG-2006

Failure Mileage
58000

Failure Speed
65

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Make

Tire Model (Name or Number)

Tire Size (Example P215/65R15)

DOT No. (Example: DOTM9ABC036)

☐ Original Equipment
☐ Prior Repair

Failure Location:

Tire Component Code

Tire Failure Type

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A CHILD SEAT FAILURE

Make:

Date Manufactured:

Model No./Name:

Seat Type:

Installation System:

Child Seat Component Code:

Failed Part:

APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION

(Please describe in detail the incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and injury(ies).)

Crash

☐ Yes

☒ No

Fire

☒ Yes

☐ No

Number of Persons Injured

2

Number of Deaths

0

Reported to Police

Y

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

Please describe (1) events leading up to the failure, (2) failure and its consequences, and (3) what was done to correct the failure; i.e., parts repaired or replaced (and if old part is available).

PETITION

I AND MY 5 YEAR OLD SON WERE ON HIGHWAY, WHEN THE ENGINE BURST AND CAUGHT ON FIRE OF MY TOYOTA CAMRY 2001 EXL. WE HAD DONE ALL THE MAINTENANCE WITH TOYOTA AND ALL CHANGES OF THE OIL REQUIREMENTS ON TIME. THE LAST OIL CHANGE WAS ONLY 4 WEEKS PRIOR THE ACCIDENT. WE WENT THROUGH TERRIFYING AND VERY DANGEROUS EXPERIENCE ALSO LOST 27,000 INVESTMENTS IN THE CAR. TOYOTA'S ENGINES HAVE THE SLUDGE PROBLEMS, BUT THEY DECLINE ANY RESPONSIBILITIES. PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SUCH DANGEROUS PROBLEM BEFORE THEY CAN LOSE A LOVED ONE. I PETITION THE AGENCY FOR A RECALL, BECAUSE OF SERIOUSNESS OF FAILURE. *NM

Include, if available: Police/Fire Department Report, Photos, and Repair Invoice.

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

The Privacy Act of 1974-Public Law 93-579 This information is requested pursuant to authority vested in the National Highway Traffic Safety Act and subsequent amendments. You are under no obligation to respond to this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist the NHTSA in determining whether a Manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If the NHTSA proceeds with administrative enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.