



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

Repository 2007 JUN 26 PM 12:07
30-MAR-2007Reference No.
10180535

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Daytime Telephone Number

E-mail Address

Mobile Telephone Number

Name

Address

City

CINCINNATI

State OH

Zip Code

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of this report to the manufacturer of your vehicle? YES NO
In the absence of an 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

Make

Model

Model Year

SAJHCL24000C

JAGUAR

XJ8

1996

Date Purchased
14-MAY-03

Dealer's Name and Telephone Number

Engine

No. Cylinders 8

Fuel Type:
Gas

Enterprise Auto Sales 597-1300

Original Owner

Dealer's City

State

Zip Code

Cincinnati, Ohio

Ohio

45211

Transmission Type

 Antilock Brakes

Powertrain

Vehicle Component Code

061110 ENGINE AND ENGINE COOLING;ENGINE;GASOLINE;BELTS AJ

AUTOMATIC

 Cruise Control

REAR WHEEL DRIVE

Multiple Failure: 1

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s)
01-FEB-2007Failure Mileage
63000Failure Speed
0

Dealer would not acknowledge defect which resulted in engine failure (premature).

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: DOTM15ABC036)

 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

Check circles in detail for both (1) Federal, Contact and Injured.

Crash

Fire

Number of Persons Injured

Number of Deaths

Reported to Police

 Yes No Yes No

0

0

N

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; include parts repaired or replaced (and if old part is available).

TL*THE CONTACT OWNS A 1996 JAGUAR XJ8. THE CONTACT DETECTED A LOUD RATTLING NOISE COMING FROM THE VEHICLE. THE VEHICLE WAS TOWED TO THE DEALER, WHO STATED THAT THE TIMING CHAIN TENSIONER FAILED WHICH CAUSED THE VALVES TO BEND. THE PISTONS AND CONNECTING ROD WERE ALSO DAMAGED. THE DEALER INFORMED THE CONTACT THAT A NEW ENGINE WOULD BE NEEDED. THE CONTACT STATED THAT THE FAILURE WAS UNEXPECTED, AND THE VEHICLE'S ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WAS UP-TO-DATE. THE CURRENT AND FAILURE MILEAGE WERE 63,000. *AK

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

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY.

The Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-502) 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.

ALLDATA

Home | Account | Contact ALLDATA | Log Out | Help

Select Vehicle | New TSBs | Technician's Reference | Component Search:

OK

Conversion Calculator

1998 Jaguar XJ-S Sedan V8-3996cc 4.0L DOHC (AJ26) SFI

Vehicle Level → Engine, Cooling and Exhaust → Engine → Technical Service Bulletins → All Technical Service Bulletins

Engine - Start-Up and Idle Rattle

Engine - Start-Up and Idle Rattle

303-68

DATE
03105

V8 XJ Series/XK

MODEL
1997-2002 MY - XK Range
1998-2002 MY V8 XJ SeriesVIN
0D1001-A24195
812258-F41862

Dealers + manufacturers were well aware of problem + opted not to notify Jaguar auto owners of consequences of failing to complete service procedure. Catastrophic engine failure was inevitable!!

Start-up and Idle Rattle - Primary Or Secondary Chain Tensioner - Replace**Issue:**

Some vehicles within the above VIN ranges may exhibit a rattle emanating from the engine on start-up and idle.

Cause:

Failure of a primary or secondary timing chain tensioner.

Note: Any faults other than timing chain tensioners are to be carried out as a separate Warranty Claim.

Action:

In case of a verified customer complaint, and the fault has been confirmed as a timing chain tensioner, install new primary or secondary timing chain tensioners as outlined below.

Note: If there is a fault with a primary tensioner, all primary and secondary tensioners must be replaced. If there is a fault with a secondary tensioner, then both secondary tensioners must be replaced.

Note: When installing the new secondary tensioner, the new modified (shorter) bolts must

be installed.

To install primary or secondary brake disk tensioner, see Global Technical Reference GTR Workshop Manual, (for all VIN ranges use 1999 MY) section 303-01.

DESCRIPTION	PART NUMBER	QTY
Primary tensioner	AJB 2325	2
Secondary tensioner - left-hand	AJB 7894	1
Secondary tensioner - right-hand	AJB 7893	1
Bolt	JFB 10007E	4

Zoom

Start for Price

Parts Information:

Warranty Information:

Description	BRO	Time	Control Part Number
XJV8 Install new primary and secondary tensioners - SC	12.65.65	5.4 hrs.	AJB 2325 and AJB 7894 or AJB 7893
XJV8 Install new primary and secondary tensioners - NA	12.65.65	5.1 hrs.	AJB 2325 and AJB 7894 or AJB 7893
XJV8 Install new secondary tensioners - SC	12.65.65	3.7 hrs.	AJB 7894 or AJB 7893
XJV8 Install new secondary tensioners - NA	12.65.65	2.7 hrs.	AJB 7894 or AJB 7893
XK Install new primary and secondary tensioners - SC	12.65.65	5.5 hrs.	AJB 2325 and AJB 7894 or AJB 7893
XK Install new primary and secondary tensioners - NA	12.65.65	4.8 hrs.	AJB 2325 and AJB 7894 or AJB 7893
XK Install new secondary tensioners - SC	12.65.65	4.0 hrs.	AJB 7894 or AJB 7893
XK Install new secondary tensioners - NA	12.65.65	2.8 hrs.	AJB 7894 or AJB 7893

Zoom

Start for Price

Warranty claims should be submitted quoting the information found in the table. This will result in payment of the stated time and, where applicable parts/miscellaneous

**Noise During Start Up –
Install Revised Timing Chain Tensioners****MODEL**
1997-99 MY XK8 Range
1998-99 MY V8 XJ Series
VIN Refer to engine
no. in text**Issue:**

Some vehicles within the above VIN range may experience a rattling noise when the engine is started. This noise may be caused by the secondary timing chain tensioners. Research has shown that a noise can originate at the chain tensioners to cause a resonance in another part of the engine.

A revised, spring assisted, secondary timing chain tensioner has been introduced to eliminate this concern, commencing at engine No. 98102106XX. Introductory VINs are not yet available. In case of a customer complaint, the revised tensioners may be installed on earlier V8 engines.

Action:

In case of a customer complaint of start up noise, determine if the noise is caused by the secondary timing chain tensioners. If the secondary timing chain tensioners are the cause of the noise, they should be replaced by the revised tensioners (Illustration 1).

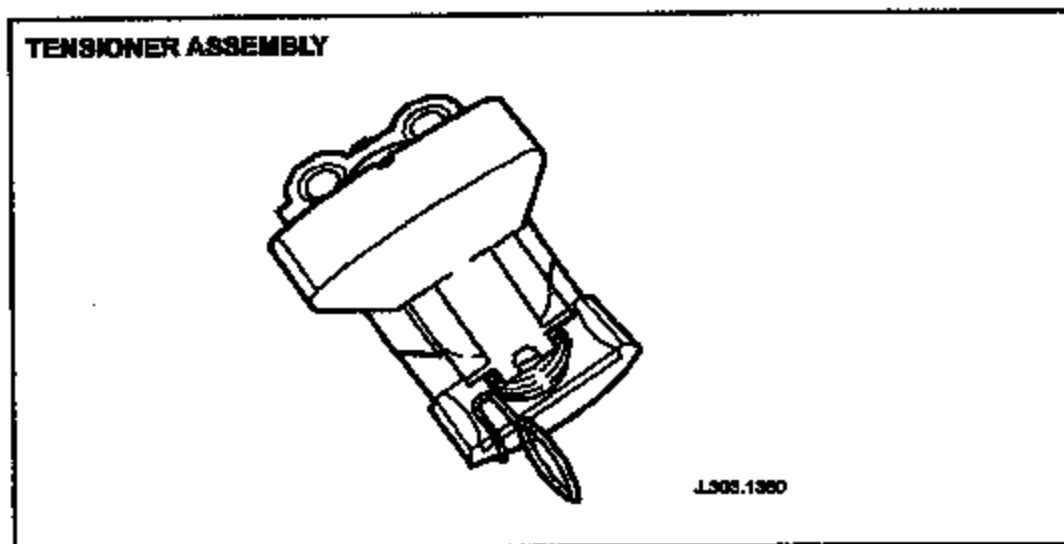


ILLUSTRATION 1

- The revised tensioner has a coil spring that presses on the piston head to provide a damping effect.
- To simplify the installation of the tensioner on the engine, a clip (shown in Illustration 2) is provided to hold the piston in a partly compressed position during assembly.

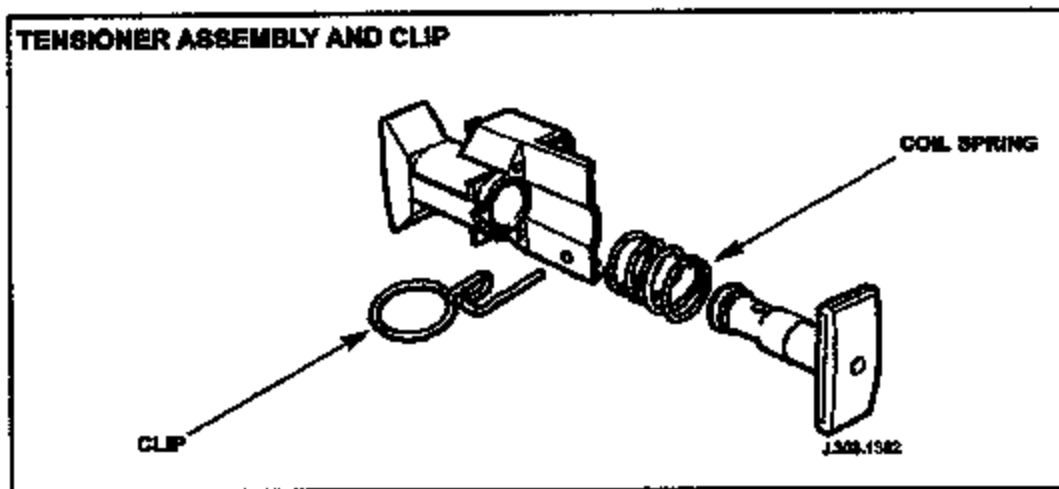


ILLUSTRATION 2

- When the piston and spring assembly is compressed to approximately half of its travel, the pin end of the clip is inserted into the hole in the tensioner body, in front of the piston head/slipper, with the finger ring of the clip positioned at the rear of the head, (as shown in Illustration 1).
- Installation of the tensioners is covered in JTIS 5, section 303-01, Basic Engine, Removal and Installation, Timing Chain Tensioner (Secondary) - A-Bank (12.65.63) or Timing Chain Tensioner (Secondary) - B-Bank (12.65.64).
- The method of removing and reinstalling the secondary timing chain tensioners has been simplified by the use of a ball-end drive bit as described in Technical Bulletin 303-28, dated 8/98.

TIMING CHAIN TENSIONER MOUNTING

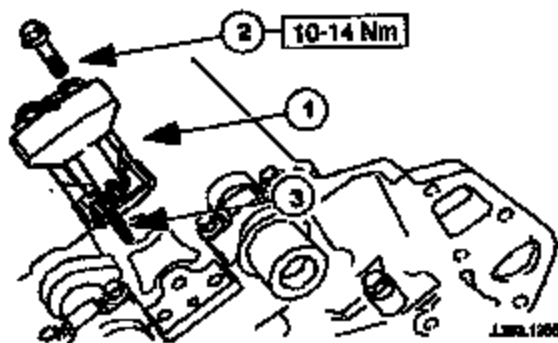


ILLUSTRATION 3

- The installation of the revised tensioner, (1, Illustration 3), is the same as the original style tensioner except that it must be installed in the compressed condition (retained by the clip).
- The retaining bolts should be tightened to the recommended torque setting of 10-14 Nm (7.4-10.3 lb. ft, 88.5-123.9 lb. in.), (2, Illustration 3), before the clip (3, Illustration 3), is removed to release the piston and tension the secondary chain.

Note: After installing a revised tensioner and removing the clip, save the clip as a service tool to assist in any future removal and reinstallation. To avoid the loss of the clip inside the timing cover, attach a length of string to assist retrieval.

Parts Information:

DESCRIPTION	PART NUMBER	QTY
Secondary Timing Chain Tensioner - 'A' bank	NCA 2017AF	1
Secondary Timing Chain Tensioner - 'B' bank	NCA 2017BE	1

Warranty Information:

FAULT CODE	R.O. NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	TIME ALLOWANCE
AN DF 07	12.65.65	Timing chain tensioner, engine set	2.85 hrs.
		XK8	2.75 hrs.
		V8 XJ Series (exc. XJR)	3.75 hrs.
		XJR	

**V8 XJ Series/XK****DATE 03/05****303-68****SERVICE****TECHNICAL BULLETIN****Start-up and Idle Rattle –
Primary Or Secondary Chain Tensioner –
Replace****MODEL**
1997-2002 MY- XK Range
1998-2002 MY V8 XJ Series
VIN
001001-A24195
812258-F41882**Issue:**

Some vehicles within the above VIN ranges may exhibit a rattle emanating from the engine on start-up and idle.

Cause:

Failure of a primary or secondary timing chain tensioner.

Note: Any faults other than timing chain tensioners are to be carried out as a separate Warranty Claim.

Action:

In case of a verified customer complaint, and the fault has been confirmed as a timing chain tensioner, install new primary or secondary timing chain tensioners as outlined below.

Note: If there is a fault with a primary tensioner, all primary and secondary tensioners must be replaced. If there is a fault with a secondary tensioner, then both secondary tensioners must be replaced.

Note: When installing the new secondary tensioner, the new modified (shorter) bolts must be installed.

Note: Where possible, carry out a visual inspection of the timing chain, if damaged, replace the timing chain.

To install primary or secondary timing chain tensioner, see Global Technical Reference GTR Workshop Manual, (for all VIN ranges use 1999 MY) section 303-01.

NOTE: THE INFORMATION IN TECHNICAL BULLETINS IS INTENDED FOR USE BY TRAINED, PROFESSIONAL TECHNICIANS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE, TOOLS, AND EQUIPMENT TO DO THE JOB PROPERLY AND SAFELY. IT INFORMS THESE TECHNICIANS OF CONDITIONS THAT MAY OCCUR ON SOME VEHICLES, OR PROVIDES INFORMATION THAT COULD ASSIST IN PROPER VEHICLE SERVICE. THE PROCEDURES SHOULD NOT BE PERFORMED BY "DO-IT-YOURSELFERS." DO NOT ASSUME THAT A CONDITION DESCRIBED AFFECTS YOUR CAR. CONTACT A JAGUAR DEALER TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE BULLETIN APPLIES TO YOUR VEHICLE.

Global Technical Reference (GTR) Workshop Manual Information:Dealer access: <https://hub.franchise.jaguar.com>Internet access: <http://www.jaguartechinfo.com>**Parts Information:**

<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>PART NUMBER</u>	<u>QTY</u>
Primary tensioner	AJB 2325	2
Secondary tensioner - left-hand	AJB 7694	1
Secondary tensioner - right-hand	AJB 7693	1
Bolt	JFB 10607E	4

Warranty Information:

Warranty claims should be submitted quoting the information found in the table below. This will result in payment of the stated time and, where applicable parts/miscellaneous expense codes as listed.

Description	SRO	Time	Causal Part Number
XJV8 Install new primary and secondary tensioners - SC	12.65.56	5.4 hrs.	AJB 2325 and AJB 7694 or AJB 7693
XJV8 Install new primary and secondary tensioners - NA	12.65.56	6.1 hrs.	AJB 2325 and AJB 7694 or AJB 7693
XJV8 Install new secondary tensioners - SC	12.65.65	3.7 hrs.	AJB 7694 or AJB 7693
XJV8 Install new secondary tensioners - NA	12.65.65	2.7 hrs.	AJB 7694 or AJB 7693
XK Install new primary and secondary tensioners - SC	12.65.56	5.5 hrs.	AJB 2325 and AJB 7694 or AJB 7693
XK Install new primary and secondary tensioners - NA	12.65.56	4.6 hrs.	AJB 2325 and AJB 7694 or AJB 7693
XK Install new secondary tensioners - SC	12.65.65	4.0 hrs.	AJB 7694 or AJB 7693
XK Install new secondary tensioners - NA	12.65.65	2.8 hrs.	AJB 7694 or AJB 7693



Independent Jaguar service specialists
for the San Francisco Bay Area since 1973
Phone: (510) 517-6603 (Oakland, CA)

Contact Continental

Mail Order

ABOUT US

SERVICE

PARTS

FINANCE



Jaguar V8 Engines 1997-2000 Preventive Tensioner Replacement

⚠ If upon start-up you notice a rattling sound from your 1997-2000 Jaguar V8 engine, or unusually rough running, turn off the engine immediately and DO NOT restart it. Have the car towed to a Jaguar specialist service facility for inspection.



The secondary tensioner (red) for each cylinder bank is visible when the valve cover is removed.

Jaguar's 4.0-liter V8, known as the AJ-V8, was the first-ever eight-cylinder engine from that manufacturer. Designed in the mid-1990s by an all-Jaguar engineering team (including employees who worked on the previous twin-cam six), it proved to be a superb combination of lightness, torque, power, and fuel efficiency, the equal of anything from BMW or Mercedes.

In their zeal to reduce the weight of the valve train and related components as a way of improving fuel efficiency, the engineers underdesigned the AJ-V8's timing gear. In particular, the cam chain tensioners. These plastic components are part of the AJ-V8's single-chain design, a weight-saving alternative to the more robust double-chain approach Jaguar has used on most of its six-cylinder engines. (The new 4.2L version of the Jaguar AJ-V8 engine has double timing chains.)

As a result of their weak design and other factors like engine overheating or poor maintenance, the plastic cam chain tensioners on 1997 to 2000 V8 Jaguars began to experience stress fractures, and so did some of the plastic guides. While the cars were under warranty, many tensioners were replaced by Jaguar service departments with improved components.

In their Technical Service Bulletin No. X303-68 of February 2006, titled "Rattle From Engine on Start-up and Idle," Jaguar states:

This Technical Bulletin has been issued to address customer concerns of a rattle emanating from the engine on start-up and idle.

Cause: Failure of a primary or secondary timing chain tensioner.

Should a customer express concern, and the fault has been confirmed as a timing chain tensioner, new primary or secondary timing chain tensioners must be installed.

Engines subject to this problem include XJ6/XJR engines with the last six digits of their VIN numbers between 812256-F41862, and XK8/XKR engines with the last six digits of their VIN numbers between 001001-A24186.

Note that late in the 1999 model year the factory began installing upgraded plastic tensioners. These second-generation units are, to the best of our knowledge, more reliable than the originals.

In 2005, Jaguar introduced a third-generation metal-based tensioner kit. (See the photos at left.) We now use the metal-based third-generation tensioners exclusively when replacing cracked first- and second-generation Jaguar V8 tensioners.

What happens when a tensioner breaks

When a plastic tensioner shatters or wears to the point the cam chain becomes loose, a rattling sound can be heard in the cam area at the front of the engine. Usually this happens on start-up, when the engine is cold.

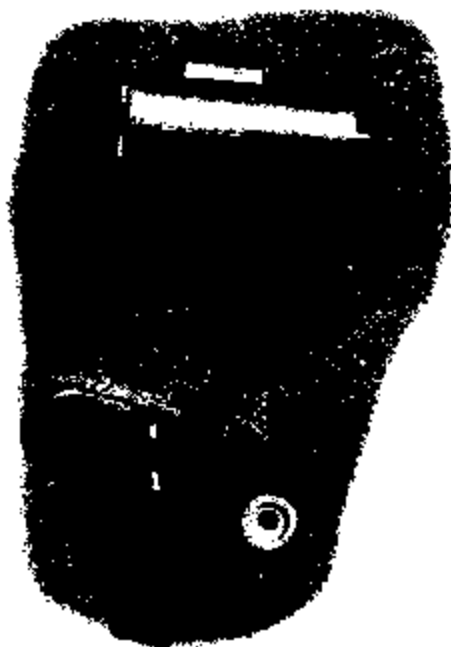
(Note that a rattling sound does not necessarily mean broken tensioners. There can be other causes that are not as drastic but nevertheless indicate trouble.)



This tensioner is cracked in the typical way first-generation tensioners fail. Cracked tensioners can break apart, causing severe engine damage.



As of April 2005 we use Jaguar's third-generation metal replacement tensioners exclusively.

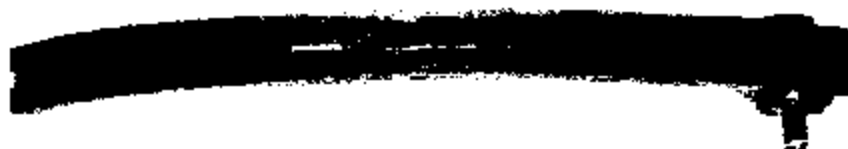
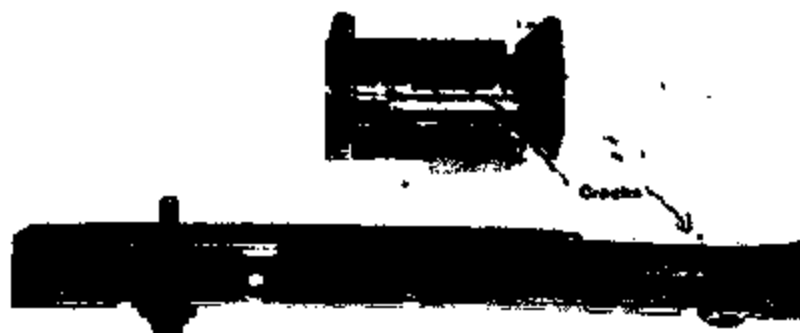


Jaguar's third-generation secondary and primary tensioners are mostly metal, not plastic. Although we have not had problems with the second-generation plastic units, as of April 2005 we are using third-generation tensioners exclusively.

Other preventive maintenance options for your late-90s Jaguar V8
In addition to timing gear replacement, we offer package prices on refurbishment of

On some occasions there is no rattling sound to serve as a warning. As the tensioners wear, the cam chains can become loose and eventually jump one or two teeth on the cam sprockets – usually on a cold start. If the chain jumps one tooth, rough running will be experienced. If it jumps more than one tooth, the valves on one block will contact the pistons, resulting in engine failure.

⚠ If upon start-up you notice a rattling sound from your 1997-2000 Jaguar V8 engine, or unusually rough running, turn off the engine immediately and DO NOT restart it. Have the car towed to a Jaguar specialist service facility for inspection.



Right bank secondary tensioner and guide

Though the tensioners of this 1998 XJ6 engine with 56,000 miles appeared intact on visual inspection with the valve covers removed, upon disassembly both were discovered to be badly cracked, and so was one of the main tensioner guides. A cracked tensioner can break apart and cause cam chain failure, damaging the engine severely.

History of tensioner failures

The AJ-V8 was first installed in the XK8/XKR starting in 1997, and then in the XJ6/XJR (and Vanden Plas models) starting in 1998. Tensioner failures have been experienced by owners of V8 models through the 2000 model year.

Jaguar Cars has instructed their dealer service shops to listen for the telltale rattling sounds during routine service visits. When the cars were under warranty, rattling tensioners, or failed engines due to tensioner breakage, would be replaced with beefed-up second-generation plastic tensioners at no charge to the owner.

Jaguar Cars will NOT cover repair of the tensioners, or associated engine failures, on cars that are out of warranty – and of course all those model years are now past their factory warranty expiration.

Some third-party extended warranties cover tensioner replacement and even engine rebuild on tensioner failure. Check with your warranty provider. Continental Imports is certified as a Jaguar repair facility by most third-party warranty providers. If you would like us to do a tensioner replacement under third-party warranty, please supply us with contact information about your warranty provider before we start the job.

What you can do if you own a 1997 - 2000 4.0L Jaguar
We recommend that if your XJ6/XK8 has passed 35,000 miles, you take preventive action and have the tensioners inspected. If they are cracked, have

other potentially problematic areas on late-90s Jaguar V8 cars:

A cooling system overhaul is a good idea for late-90s Jaguars if it has not already been done. The original water pump was a weak design and caused overheating in many early Jaguar V8s. Its replacement (see below) is far more robust and reliable.



Jaguar's original water pump design was faulty, resulting in broken ceramic impeller blades and engine overheating. The improved unit (above) is far more reliable and highly recommended if your car still has the original.

We recommend the thermostat be replaced every two years at minimum. Often, a worn thermostat manifests itself not by overheating, but via secondary problems such as engine warning light, low coolant indicator, and other symptoms.



Thermostats should be replaced at least every two years on late-90s Jaguar V8 cars. Worn units can cause secondary problems that are not immediately traceable to the thermostat unless the technician has experience spotting the tell-tale indicators.

Another preventive maintenance item to consider: replacement spark plugs and/or ignition coils. The original units often deteriorate well before the manufacturer's 100K mile recommended replacement interval, and cause rough

them replaced before they fail.

While many cars make it to higher mileage without failure, a significant number do not. We don't know the exact number because the factory is keeping it confidential, but we are aware of the problem through extensive our service work on Bay Area V8 Jaguars, and from our discussions with parts distributors.

Jaguar dealer service departments will not replace the tensioners before failure under warranty without the engine displaying obvious symptoms (e.g., rattling noises). And if you own a 1997-2000 Jaguar, your factory warranty has expired by now.

As a preventive maintenance operation, your Jaguar service department, or Continental Imports, can replace your timing gear with improved components. At Continental, we use exactly the same parts the Jaguar dealers do, and having done so many V8 timing gear upgrades, we are highly expert and efficient at this procedure. Our parts and labor are guaranteed for one year.



Depending on your needs, we can replace only the secondary tensioners, or as shown above, the primaries, secondaries, chains and guides. At the bottom left are replacement water pump and thermostat, another weak point on early Jaguar V8s. We use the same replacement parts we are used by Jaguar dealership service departments, and we guarantee our parts and labor for one year, unlimited mileage.

Tensioner replacement of the Jaguar V8 is a prudent investment because the cost of inspection and replacement (if required) is reasonable, and the car is in almost all other respects exceptionally reliable. (Early XJ6s and XK8s have a few other, less serious, weak points that can be remedied at the same time as the tensioners. See the sidebar at left.)

Free tensioner inspection, warranted replacement

For a limited time we are offering free tensioner inspection for eight-cylinder Jaguars from 1997 - 2000 model years. At no charge we will remove the right-bank valve cover and inspect the secondary tensioner on that bank. You will be able to see the tensioner's condition for yourself at that time.

Our shop offers a special tensioner-replacement package: an all-inclusive price for replacement of the secondary tensioners alone, or for the complete replacement of secondaries, primaries, guides, all chains, and seals. We now use Jaguar's third-generation metal tensioners.

Should you elect to replace your tensioners, make an appointment and we promise 48-hour turnaround. Our 12-month, unlimited mileage warranty will

running and poor starting. At no cost we will inspect your plugs and, if wear indications are visible, point them out to you.



We offer replacement plugs, gaskets and other parts for your late-90s Jaguar V8. All parts are OEM quality and warranted for 12 months, unlimited mileage.

If you live outside the San Francisco Bay Area, see our [Mail Order](#) page.

MONEY SAVING TIP: If your late-90s Jaguar V8 is approaching the mileage at which the factory recommends a major service — 80K miles or 90K miles — it may be advantageous to look into a combined major service and refurbishment of components that often need replacing at higher mileage: tensioners, water pump, thermostat, plugs, valve cover gaskets, oil pan gasket, and so on.

apply to all parts and labor.

If you live outside the San Francisco Bay Area, or want to do the job yourself, see our [Mail Order](#) page for parts kits you can order directly from us.

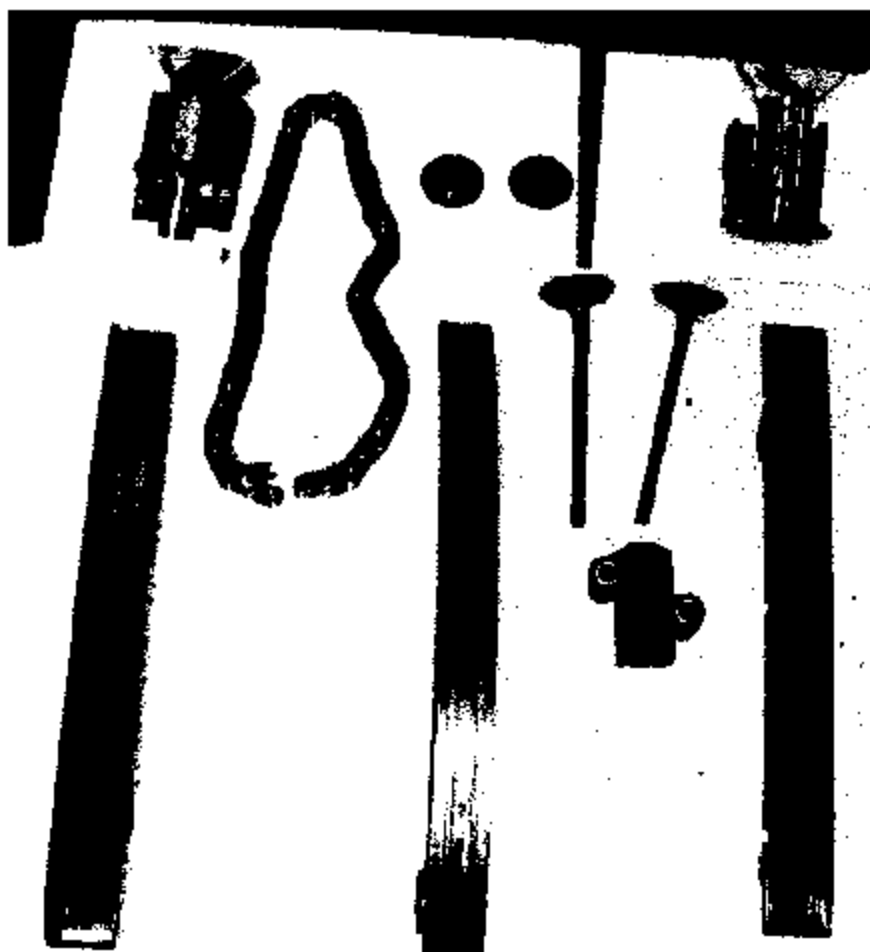
Could you experience the problem with the new tensioners after replacement is carried out? Jaguar's third-generation replacement tensioners are far more robust in design (see photos at left) and, though it is too soon to ascertain their longevity with complete certainty, we are confident that they will provide a "one-time" solution to the problem. One thing we are certain of is that all parts and labor we provide are covered under our one-year, unlimited mileage warranty.

Precautions you can take

If your V8 Jaguar has low mileage and its original tensioners, follow these precautions to maximize original tensioner life. Avoid letting the car sit for several days if possible. (This can cause stretched chains to "sag" and then jump a tooth or two under the torque of engine start-up.) Instead, drive it daily if you can. Avoid driving short distances on a cold engine — let it warm up before shutoff by driving at least 15 minutes if possible.

Maintain the car faithfully. We recommend oil and filter changes every 5,000 miles (as opposed to the manual's 10,000 mile recommendation), using 5W30 mineral oil. (You can use synthetic if you like.)

Your original tensioners **MAY** last longer if the above precautions are taken, but due to the nature of their design, we can make no guarantees.



When the worst happens: This 1999 XJ6's tensioners both cracked. When the one at the top left broke, its timing chain (shown) snapped and the valves collided with the pistons. Two of the bent valves are shown in this photo. Though such damage requires significant shop time to repair, engine

replacement is usually NOT indicated, and the parts required are reasonable in quantity and cost.

If you hear a rattle in the front of the engine, stop the car immediately and have it towed to a Jaguar service facility. Similarly, if the engine is running very roughly or refuses to start, have it towed. In either case, DO NOT TRY TO RESTART THE ENGINE.

Engine rebuild after tensioner failure is an option

If the worst happens and the valves contact the pistons due to tensioner failure, all is not necessarily lost. Whereas some places recommend engine replacement (at a cost of \$10,000 or more), we can repair an engine that has suffered tensioner failure and subsequent valve damage on one bank for less than under half that price.

Investing in preventive replacement of the tensioners will remedy this excellent engine's only serious flaw. If proper maintenance is carried out and the car is not abused, your V8 Jaguar engine should be as reliable and long-lived as its famously durable 6-cylinder ancestor.

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PistonHeads

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Author
Discussion
[broadbean747](#)
Monday 25th July 2005

[\[report\]](#)
6 posts
19 months

Dear Pistonheads,

This is my first post on the site. I have been lurking for quite a while and I have always enjoyed the shared information and debate. PH is a terrific site. Thank you to all the PH contributors...especially the regulars. I really don't know how you find the time!

For the record, I am pro traffic police, pro raising the standard of the driving test, and against cameras.

I have recently purchased a 2000 Jaguar XJR8 after owning a 1998 Jaguar XJ8 3.2 Executive. This forum and others provided some useful hints and tips while I was researching both cars, not to mention a myriad of other motoring gems.

To repay the collective goodwill and to make my first post a positive contribution I have compiled all I have learnt into a buyer's guide for the XJ8/XJR8 (1997 - 2003). A substantial part of the guide will apply to the XKB/XKR too.

Most of the information exists elsewhere but I couldn't find it all in one place. I offer enormous credit to all those folks (too many to mention) who researched and posted the information in the first place.

The guide is my interpretation of information. Please remember that and draw your own conclusions. That said, I based the logical part of my XJR8 purchase decision on everything here.

I have structured the guide into an executive summary and 6 sections.

Potential Problems

- 1) Nikasil Cylinder Linings/High Sulphur Fuel
- 2) Timing Chain Tensioners
- 3) Sticking Throttle Mechanism
- 4) Thermostat/Water-pump
- 5) Fading Walnut

and....

- 6) General Information and Sagely Advice

Off we go then.....

Executive Summary (see below for more detail)

Some sources will tell you that if your VIN starts with a letter (for example F) then you will definitely have steel liners. This is incorrect. There are several examples of XJ owners with FXXXXX VINs who have had their liners inspected and found the liners to be nikasil.

Jaguar dealers can perform a test to check for premature engine wear due to nikasil issues. It's called a blow-by test. If you buy an early car from a dealer, make sure this test is gets done.

Just because you have nikasil does not mean you have a bad engine. Without exposure to high sulphur fuel it will probably be OK.

Conclusion of Nikasil Issue

Cars registered before September 2000 will probably have nikasil liners. Cars registered after September 2000 will probably have steel liners.

Cars registered before 1st January 2000 are a higher risk purchase than those registered after 1st January 2000.

An interesting thought is that cars registered between January 2000 and September 2000 will have nikasil linings but they will not have been exposed to high sulphur fuel. It is possible that these engines will be harder wearing than the steel lined engines and owners of such vehicles will benefit from nikasil in the longer term. I rather like this idea.....my XJR8 was registered in July 2000 :-)

2) Timing Chain Tensioners Issue

Description/Bad News

Although probably a low percentage overall, many owners of the XJ8 8 cylinder engines have reported problems with the timing chain tensioners. XJR8s are also susceptible but possibly to a lesser degree because they use a simpler timing mechanism.

The tensioner's job is to keep the timing chain tight. If a tensioner fails, the timing chain becomes loose and the chain can jump one or more teeth on the cogs in the engine. Apparently one jumped tooth results in rough running. Two jumped teeth and the engine can destroy itself.

Good News and Information

The good news is that a) not all engines are affected, b) the problem can be prevented in advance although at significant cost, and c) Jaguar acknowledge the problem (sort of) and have revised their tensioner design twice during the production run.

The problem is mainly confined to cars from 1997, 1998, and 1999. Cars from this era had the original specification tensioners. These first generation tensioners are made of plastic. During regular use the plastic weakens until eventually it cracks and in some cases disintegrates. When this happens the tensioner loses its compression and the pressure on the timing chain is reduced or lost making a jumped tooth more likely....bad news although it is not an automatic disaster.

The problem generally shows itself at approximately 60000 miles (100,000km) and upwards.

Jaguar issued a Technical Service Bulletin (TSB) that addresses the issue.

The TSB number is 303-30.

Here is the text.

<<start of Jaguar text>>

Engine - Rattle Noise on Start Up 303-30

DATE 12/98

V8 XJ Series/XK8

MODEL

1997-99 MY XK8 Range

1998-99 MY V8 XJ Series

VIN

Refer to engine no. in

text

Noise During Start Up - Install Revised Timing Chain Tensioners

Issue:

Some vehicles within the above VIN range may experience a rattling noise when the engine is started. This noise may be caused by the secondary timing chain tensioners. Research has shown that a noise can originate at the chain tensioners to cause a resonance in another part of the engine.

A revised, spring assisted, secondary timing chain tensioner has been introduced to eliminate this concern, commencing at engine No. 98102106XX. Introductory VINs are not yet available. In case of a customer complaint, the revised tensioners may be installed on earlier V8 engines. Action:

In case of a customer complaint of start up noise, determine if the noise is caused by the secondary timing chain tensioners. If the secondary timing chain tensioners are the cause of the noise, they should be replaced by the revised tensioners

<<end of Jaguar text>>

My 1998 XJ8 3.2 had this rattle. The best way to hear the rattle is to open the bonnet, and get someone else to start the car while you listen at the front of the engine. Make sure you have left the car overnight (really overnight) so that the tensioners have lost all their pressure.

To me the rattle is similar to the sound a bicycle chain makes when it runs loose through its chain guard. Imagine that you turn your bicycle upside down to put the chain on and you turn the pedals by hand. Usually (in my experience) there are a few seconds where the chain doesn't quite catch on the teeth and it is dragged loosely along the inside (upside down) chain guard. Imagine that sound heavier and faster and you have the engine rattle. If you don't quite follow (or you have never had a chain guard) just imagine a heavy metal chain being pulled quickly along some thick plastic. That's the kind of sound and it is very audible. Trust me, you will know it if you have it. The sound will last for a few seconds. In my case it was two- three seconds and other people have reported greater durations than that.

You can consult your engine number (different to the VIN number). The engine number may be on your car's documentation. Otherwise you can apparently find it on your engine at the front left-hand side (as you sit in the car). I couldn't see mine but there are some descriptions of "how to" on the web.

<http://forums1.roadfly.com/jaguar/for>

Interestingly the engine number is something of a time and date stamp...keep it

simple, and why not?

Pre engine number 98102106XX you should be careful. After this engine number Jaguar introduced the second generation of tensioners. They are strengthened (although still plastic) and they seem to do a much better job. My 2000 XJR has no rattle at all during starting. Jaguar released a steel tensioner in 2002/2003. Some Jaguar technicians have reported fitting this steel tensioner during preventative maintenance.

It is possible to upgrade all your tensioners and preferably to the steel version. This is quite a big job costing approximately 2000 pounds or 3000 euros at a main dealer. Many independent specialists will do it for less but it isn't small change. Still, what price peace of mind?

Here are some good articles on the subject.

www.johnmuyvihill.com/Personal/jag_service_issues.htm

www.jag-lovers.org/cjw/#0104a

Summary of Tensioners Issue

1997-1999 have first generation tensioners.
1999-2002 have the second generation.
2002-2003 probably has the third generation.

If you buy earlier than engine number 98102106XX, make sure you factor in the potential costs and hassle of this issue.

After engine number 98102106XX you don't need to worry too much.

3) Throttle Mechanism Issue Description/Bad News

Under certain driving conditions your engine can stall. This usually happens on high speed roads (dual carriageways or motorways) at speeds around 60MPH/100KMPH.

I have personally experienced this with my 1998 XJ8 3.2 and it's not good. I was travelling at 65 MPH in the middle lane of the motorway. Suddenly and without warning I lost all power (the engine stalled) and I had to navigate across traffic to the hard shoulder. The car will start and drive perfectly well once the ignition is switched off then on again. This happened several times over a period of 3 months.

Good News and Information

Similarly to the tensioners, the good news is that a) not all cars are affected, b) it's a relatively easy and cheapish fix, and c) Jaguar acknowledge the problem (sort of) with changes during the production run. Jaguar issued a Technical Service Bulletin (TSB S514) to correct the problem.

Apparently some dealers don't acknowledge the issue mind you. Perhaps they haven't received the bulletin, who knows? I must say that I find it incredible that any Jaguar dealer sells a second hand car without checking and fixing this issue. It's not that hard or expensive to put right and if someone has a serious accident a court case could develop. In America some people are talking about a class

Performance of the XJR8 - Part 2

Granted, there are quicker cars and there are more luxurious cars, but no other car combines such luxury and such pace with such style. Of course, this is subjective but if like me you a) are a traditional automotive enthusiast, and b) desire practical performance motoring without spending truly serious money, nothing matches the XJR8.

800
1078 posts
30 months

Tuesday 26th July 2005  [quote](#)

[\[report\]](#)

Congratulations, one of the most informative posts I've ever read on PH. 😊

Any questions on buying an XJR - this will be the definitive link 🙄

Great choice of car, I really miss mine 🙄

Welcome and enjoy. 😊

John millar
93 posts
30 months

Tuesday 26th July 2005  [quote](#)

[\[report\]](#)

Well done on a very useful guide, here's my take on the tensioner issue.

Secondary Timing Chain Tensioner Reliability. (4.0 Litre engines)

These components were developed using innovative techniques and materials, for the brand new AJVB engine. The material being a light weight and durable Polyamide composite. In fact, there are quite a few "plastic" components found on this engine, and whilst weight saving, and beneficial to performance, they have not been designed to cope with some of the extreme conditions and neglect that can, and do occur.

The concern is not limited to, but is most often seen in the Secondary Timing Chain Tensioners. The primary tensioners and guides are also constructed from the same material, but due to the way they function, don't seem to have as many problems.

The design has been revised several times, on the latest version the main body is of metal construction.

The tensioners take up the slack in the timing chains by oil pressure acting on the device to extend a piston from the tensioner body. The first problem with this idea was recognized early on, and addressed in 1998. If the tensioner fails to maintain the oil pressure, and the piston retracts after the engine has stopped, this will cause the chains to rattle on start-up. This was solved with the addition of the spring assisted piston.

The far the more worrying concern that has come to light, is that the material of the tensioner body, and the part that is in contact with the chains, can fracture, and become trapped in the chains. This can cause a sudden stress in the timing gear, and could cause the chain to snap. If the plastic cover that the chain runs over becomes detached, the chain will be running over the metal sub structure of

the tensioner, causing chain wear.

The latest version of tensioner addresses these concerns, with a metal tensioner body, and a more secure "slipper" fitted to the piston.

What seems to shorten the life of these plastic components is, lack of regular oil changes, and any overheating of the engine.

I personally do not see these plastic parts as a life of the engine component, more as an item that would be better renewed at say, major service intervals 60k, considering the damage failure can cause, and the relative small cost of maintaining them in good condition. This is just my point of view, from balancing the information that is currently available.

This extract from JAGUAR WORLD MONTHLY Dec. 2003 "The weak link is the upper chain tensioner, which is a double ended device with a fixed slipper at one end to guide the drive side of the chain, and spring loaded the other side to progressively take up slack as the chain wears. Unfortunately, the plastic used seems to break down over time, cracking, and eventually disintegrating. Eventually one of the slippers will fall off, leaving only the metal frame to support the chain."

After reading the latest article in the JAGUAR ENTHUSIASTS CLUB magazine, I contacted the editor, Nigel Thorley, as I was concerned that they had not made mention of the availability of the latest version of tensioner. I also contacted my mechanic, who checked the availability of the parts. I am pleased to say that these parts are now available for anyone considering this work in the future, as this will hopefully see an end to this weak point in an otherwise robust engine. (see below)

Thanks again for taking the time to come and see me.

I have acted upon the service note and ordered the revised tensioners.

they are indeed a aluminium body and therefore can be considered more robust.

Interestingly, they do not have the external spring assist that the revised plastic ones have.

This not withstanding, we will now be fitting these metal ones from now on, although I do not anticipate problems with the plastic versions we have been fitting.

thanks again for the heads up.

As indicated, anyone who has had revised plastic tensioners fitted should expect long service from them, as long as the engine oil is changed at the optimum intervals, and there has been no overheating of the engine.

If this problem is addressed before the tensioner starts to disintegrate, it is only necessary to renew the secondary tensioners. If the chains have been running against the metal sub frame of the tensioner, the chains should be replaced. This is a far more involved procedure, and it would be prudent to replace primary chains and tensioners also.

SECONDARY TENSIONER INFORMATION SHEET

Ways in which the tensioners fail.

Rattle at start up , caused by oil pressure bleed down.

Rattle at start up and idle, cause by plastic slipper becoming detached.

Resulting slack causes chain to jump 1 tooth causing poor running.
Resulting slack causes chain to jump more than 1 tooth causing valves to collide with pistons.
Chain breakage caused by fragments being trapped in timing gear.

Technical Service Bulletins Released by Jaguar
December 1998 Bulletin No. 303-30
February 2005 Bulletin No. X303-68

Vehicles VIN range affected, 001001-A24195 xk model

Magazine articles on the subject
Jaguar World Monthly, Dec 2003 - Jan. 2004
Jaguar Enthusiast Magazine March 2005

Part numbers for the latest metal tensioners

Description Part No. Quantity

Secondary tensioner left-hand AJ87694 1
Secondary tensioner right-hand AJ87693 1
Bolt JFB 10607E 4

Likely cost to carry out the work

Replacing secondary tensioners only. £300-£500
Replacing all tensioners, chains and guides. £1,000- £1,500

John Millar 2005

>> Edited by John millar on Tuesday 26th July 11:53

JagLover
12077 posts
39 months

Tuesday 26th July 2005  quote

[report]

Welcome 

jan xjr
514 posts
33 months

Tuesday 26th July 2005  quote

[report]

enjoy your car mate. i have had my 99 xjr for a year now with no problems at all other than finding the time to drive it as it should be driven.
enjoy your car and let us know how you get on, good luck and welcome to the club

mickyveloce
68 posts
30 months

Tuesday 26th July 2005  quote


[report]

Superb post ; surely this is what this forum is all about rather than winging about being caught speeding etc . I love these cars although can't justify buying one at the moment . Congratulations on choosing almost certainly the finest luxury car (for the price) and good luck with it . MV

groom1
2964 posts
17 months

Tuesday 26th July 2005  quote

[report]

Gentlemen, we have a new authority on the XJR. 



auto safety fact

search

Thank you.

**We've received 7 complaints for Jaguar/XJ8.
Thank you for your interest in joining a class action lawsuit. Please
watch our website for notice of whether a class action is filed.**

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Submit a Complaint

step 3 of 3

Failures and Repairs

	Date of failure	Mileage at failure	Total repair cost	Amount manufacturer paid	Number of repair attempts
engine	March 2007	66215	9000-12000	0	1
accessories (cd/tape, radio, navigation system, etc)	March 2007	64125	0	0	1
accelerator/throttle	March 2007	66215		Completed campaign	1

Problem description

My 1998 Jaguar XJ6 has suffered a catastrophic engine failure on February 1, 2007. This failure I might add was not a direct result of insufficient maintenance but more so an exclusive engineering failure and proven flaw. As a direct result of this timing belt tensioner failure my engine was compromised leading to a complete engine failure. This requires a complete overhaul. This plastic component was determined to be defective by Jaguar and service bulletins had been issued to the dealers. Neither the dealers nor the manufacture has issued a recall nor a

- Send me more information about (Jaguar -- XJ6)
- Add me to the Center for Auto Safety mailing list
- I am interested in a Class Action

[back to step 2 of 3](#)
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Center for Auto Safety



Submit a Complaint

step 2 of 3

Vehicle Information

Make of car

Model of car

Year

Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)

The VIN has 17 characters which are a combination of letters and numbers. It can be seen from outside the vehicle by looking through the windshield at the edge of the dash closest to the roof pillar on the driver side of the vehicle. It will also be on the vehicle registration and insurance cards as well as on most Repair Orders.

Transmission Type

Manual
 Automatic
 Continuously Variable (CVT)

Complaint Information

Has the vehicle been involved in one or more of the following?
 Check all that apply.

Fire Crash Death Injury

Have any of the following systems failed? Check all that apply.

Have any of the following systems failed? Check all that apply.

accelerator/throttle accessories (cd/tape, radio, navigation system, etc) air conditioning/heat

How we use your complaints

From the infamous Ford Pinto to Firestone tires, CAS has used consumer complaints to obtain recalls and make auto and tire companies take responsibility for their defects and lemons. Consumer complaints led to passage of lemon laws in every state and stronger safety standards for every car. Without consumers telling the world about their lemons, there would no lemon laws, fewer recalls and weaker safety laws. We need you to add your complaint to our files. All information you submit, except your e-mail address, will be made part of our public complaint database maintained on this website to generate recalls and other remedies for all consumers with similar problems and so that consumers can organize around common defects and industry abuses they encounter.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> airbag | <input type="checkbox"/> body & frame | <input type="checkbox"/> brakes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> computer controls | <input type="checkbox"/> doors & windows (non-power) | <input type="checkbox"/> driveline (differential, transfer case, u-joints) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> electrical/battery | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engine | <input type="checkbox"/> engine cooling (radiator, water pump) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> exhaust/emission | <input type="checkbox"/> fuel system | <input type="checkbox"/> lights (exterior & interior) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> mirrors | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Identify in Problem Description Box) | <input type="checkbox"/> paint |
| <input type="checkbox"/> power options (window/door/seat/roof) | <input type="checkbox"/> seats & seat belts | <input type="checkbox"/> steering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> suspension | <input type="checkbox"/> tire | <input type="checkbox"/> transmission |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wheel/axle | <input type="checkbox"/> windshield & wipers | |

[back to step 1 of 3](#)

[continue to step 2 of 3](#)

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Electrical System	0	No Reports
Engine and Engine Cooling System	3	Read Reports in Viewer

Yes, include on Custom Report

Create Custom Report

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CONSUMER COMPLAINT: ODI Case Number: 10167848

Component: ENGINE AND ENGINE COOLING:ENGINE:GASOLINE:BELTS AND ASSOCIATED PULLEYS

Details: TL - THE CONTACT OWNS A 1998 JAGUAR XJ8, AND STATED THAT THE TIMING TENSIONER FAILED AND CAUSED THE VALVES TO STAY OPEN, WHICH IN TURN CAUSED THE VEHICLE TO LOSE POWER AT ANY GIVEN TIME. THE CURRENT AND FAILURE MILEAGE WERE 66,000. *AK

Occurrences: 1 Injuries: 0
Fail Dates: 02/01/2007 Deaths: 0
Date added to database: 4/4/2007

[FILE] your own complaint on this model car.

Yes, include on Custom Report

Create Custom Report

Create

CONSUMER COMPLAINT: ODI Case Number: 10168225

Component: ENGINE AND ENGINE COOLING:ENGINE:GASOLINE:BELTS AND ASSOCIATED PULLEYS

Details: TL - THE CONTACT OWNS A 1998 JAGUAR XJ8. THE CONTACT DETECTED A LOUD RATTLING NOISE COMING FROM THE VEHICLE. THE VEHICLE WAS TOWED TO THE DEALER, WHO STATED THAT THE TIMING CHAIN TENSIONER FAILED WHICH CAUSED THE VALVES TO BEND. THE PISTONS AND CONNECTING ROD WERE ALSO DAMAGED. THE DEALER INFORMED THE CONTACT THAT A NEW ENGINE WOULD BE NEEDED. THE CONTACT STATED THAT THE FAILURE WAS UNEXPECTED, AND THE VEHICLE'S ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WAS UP-TO-DATE. THE CURRENT AND FAILURE MILEAGE WERE 62,000. *AK

Occurrences: 1 Injuries: 0
Fail Dates: 02/01/2007 Deaths: 0
Date added to database: 3/30/2007

[FILE] your own complaint on this model car.

Yes, include on Custom Report

Create Custom Report

Create

CONSUMER COMPLAINT: ODI Case Number: 10168240

Component: ENGINE AND ENGINE COOLING

Details: I HAVE A 1998 JAGUAR XJ8. THE VEHICLE STALLS AT HIGH SPEEDS, GENERALLY AFTER I ACCELERATE OVER 50 MPH. THE VEHICLE IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO CONTROL AND CAN ONLY BE RESTARTED IF YOU BRING IT TO A STOP. I HAD THIS HAPPEN WHILE DRIVING THE CAR BY CA. I WAS ALMOST KILLED WHEN THE VEHICLE STALLED. JAGUAR DEALER, SANTA MONICA, REPAIRED AS CYL BURN OUT. MECHANIC TOLD ME STALLING HAPPENED FREQUENTLY WITH THIS MODEL. A FEW YEARS LATER, SAN ANTONIO TX ON THE 163 HIGHWAY RUSH HOUR, CAR STALLED CAUSING ME TO SWERVE NEXT TO CENTER MEDIAN KIPPING OFF THE ENGINE COVER ON DEBRIS, JAGUAR FIXED THROTTLE BODY

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Author: Jagdrive on 2006-06-15 at 05:42:12

posted from: Host: sch053-79.earthlink.net IP: 193.203.65.16

Subject: Re: What to look for in jag xj8
message: Hi Darcy,

I too have an 3.2 V8 XJ, but mine is a 1997, one of the very very first to come off the line. They are common in the UK, but less so elsewhere. I believe the US didn't get the 3.2 at all.

Anyhow, there are a few common issues that affect the X308's, which although have been discussed previously I will attempt to summarize here :

The 97 to 99 (and some 00) cars have Mikasil cylinder liners, which in the early years suffered from erosion due to the high sulphur content of petrol, which since 2000 has been reduced/eliminated. Jaguar replaced many engines that were in warranty with steel lined units which 'solved' the problem. However, a Mikasil engine which has had regular oil changes and run on quality fuel (Shell, Esso, etc.) can apparently outlast the equivalent steel lined engine! For a quick test, remove the air inlet trunking from the air box and check for oil. Check the small corrugated breathe pipe for oil too.

Too much oil in there could mean blow-by problems and worn Mikasil liners.

The best accepted way to check this is to have a mechanic do a proper blow-by test.

The next issue is the timing chain and tensioners. The upper and lower tensioners are largely made of plastic and have a tendency to crack, eventually leading to the chain slipping/coming off with the result of many bent valves and a big bang! Usually the failed tensioners will cause a metallic grating sound to be heard from the front of the engine, particularly at startup. The noise sometimes goes away as the engine warms up. This isn't a definitive test though, tensioners have been known to fail without audible warning.

The only way to really check it is a visual inspection, or better, replace them. The cost varies dramatically, this has been recently discussed in other postings.

Finally, the water pump and thermostat. These items are also notorious for failure, leading to overheating which exacerbates the tensioner problem explained above. These are inexpensive to replace and are well worth doing for peace of mind. It's also fairly easy to DIY, too.

On all the Jag's I've owned I've almost always had trouble with the Pirelli P4000 tyres - no exception on the XJ8. It generally manifests itself as a 'shimmy' or 'shake' through the steering at between 50 - 80mph. Best advice is to get rid of them, if you can.

Electrics, bodywork and interior are generally very reliable. A quick check of the leather is worth doing, especially the driver's side bolster, which tends to wear with the constant entry/exit to the car. It can be quite easily fixed, though. Make sure you have at least two keys (the XJ8 originally had three - two black master keys and a green Valet key) they're costly to replace. The alarm remote, however, you can get off ebay and program them yourself.

I've had pretty much all the problems described above bar the Mikasil - at 83,000 miles I'm pretty much past the danger zone. (pretty much Zero oil consumption). For very little money now you can appreciate a car that originally cost £35,000 for second hand Mandoe money - Well worth the effort!

Dave,

http://img.aholobusnet.com/albums/v38/mtdave/site/

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19th Mar 2006, 12:42

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www.volvocars.us**6th Apr 2006, 19:33**[See your credit report and score for Free!](#)

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Steven in LA.

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15th Jan 2007, 11:06



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If you think Jaguars are bad try modern Mercedes - the most unreliable/overpriced cars you'll ever find.

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19th Feb 2007, 11:05



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I have a 1998 Jaguar Van Den Plas with a 4.0-Liter V8 with 70,000 miles and a timing chain problem. Last week my wife drove it to a meeting, and she said the car exhibited no warning symptoms during that drive. After the meeting the car would not start, so she had the car towed to a local (non-dealer) service shop. (There are no dealers within approximately 50 miles of where we live.)

The service shop has just started the diagnosis, but they report that the engine will not turn over, the timing chain is broken, and they have found valve guide debris in one of the cylinders. The cost of this repair remains to be determined, but I am expecting a cost on the order of a few thousand dollars.

I found a Jaguar Owners' Club website with a discussion of "Timing chain tensioner problems and Jaguar's response", and someone had posted a letter from Jaguar USA stating "Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention.... Any repairs after expiration of the warranty are the responsibility of the owner."

I believe the timing chain problem and the Nikasil bores are latent defects that should be recognized by Jaguar. Since they refuse to recognize any responsibility for this design error, I conclude that the suggestion of a class action suit in the 10 Feb 2007 13:42 post above might be the way Jaguar owners should proceed. I would support such an action.

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20th Feb 2007, 19:30

I am looking at a Jag XK8 1998 with 70000 ms on it. the current owner states that it has been maintained by the dealer since new. Any suggestions or caveats before I purchase this car? I love the lines of this car and the price is fantastic

Thanks.

J.

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You better than anybody know that Jaguar's legendary 4.2L six needed a top-end rebuild by 100K miles. The early 12s were prone to overheating, and if that happened once, it was bye-bye engine block.

aluminum-block Nikasil AJ-26, regularly maintained and running low-sulphur gas, should have a lifetime in the hundreds of thousands of miles. (One of the Jag forums has a member with more than 300K miles on his X308 and he says it is running perfectly.) As with BMW's 4.0L aluminum/Nikasil V-8 of the same vintage, this is a new generation of lightweight, long-life, low-maintenance, high-performance engines that will retain their power, fuel economy and low oil consumption beyond the wildest dreams of the owners of earlier Jag engines. The AJ-26 is a fantastic accomplishment from a small manufacturer.

I do feel that Jaguar should mandate low-sulphur fuel in the Nikasil models' owner manual, and include an explicitly stated check of the chain tensioners at regular services. And yes, in SPECIAL cases like Donald's - provided his car has been dealer-maintained and truly did not exhibit any warning signs -- there should be some compensation.

That said, the Nikasil/chain tensioner issues have not, as far as I know, become "common knowledge" among the great unwashed. (Something else has, though; I mention it below.)

Manufacturers are being hit with class-action suits all the time - Ford is facing dozens. I doubt Ford fears this for the two problems cited above. In the Nikasil case they have plenty of company: BMW, Porsche, and probably other premium builders as well. Within two years all high-sulphur fuel will be gone from the USA, and so will fuel for the Nikasil reputation.

I do not think either the Nikasil or chain tensioner issue will affect resale outside the enthusiast market. In any case, I'd happily pay less to get more - the Nikasil liners in my BMW 740i brought its value down on the enthusiast boards, but at 120,000 miles my car was burning not a drop of oil.

Here's more fat for the fire: A far greater threat to XJ-series resale, in my opinion, is that blasted aluminum body on the new X350s. I am mystified why they did this. They are a bugger to repair - and even though Ford is opening additional aluminum-capable body shops, that just reinforces the horror story of having a fender bender and waiting for weeks to get it fixed. And heaven help you if you have to pay for it.

outstanding Audi A8's resale value has already tanked largely due to this issue, which IS common knowledge out there. X350 owners, this in mind! I'm far happier to own a sweeter looking, Nikasil engined, steel-bodied, lower-priced X308, thank you very much!

John Mulvihill, Technical Writer
Oakland Hills, CA
1988 XJ6 Anthracite/Charcoal

2004-02-25 17:56:31 Re.: Timing chain tensioner failure - response from donald j koepnick
Jaguar Cars

Pascal,

I can assure you that I heard no rattle or other engine noise before the tensioner broke. I can further assure all that I am not a novice when it comes to Jaguars, having owned, driven and restored 7 of them. I have completely rebuilt two Jag engines - a 3.8 from my 1960 Mark II and a 4.2 from the 71 E-Type OTS that I have owned and driven since 1982.

In my opinion the issue here is that Jaguar knew the problem existed and in my case did nothing to prevent the disaster. One of my fellow Carolina Jaguar Club members has discovered a 1988 technical bulletin #303-30 which advised the dealers of the problem and the recommended fix. I purchased my 87 XK8 from Leith Jaguar in Cary NC in Aug. 2001. They had originally leased it to a local businessman, and took the car back at the end of the lease in Nov 2000 with 40000 miles. The car had been serviced by Leith and they had done nothing about the tensioners. After purchasing the car, I continued with the recommended maintenance, using Bob Dunn Jaguar in Greensboro. My car was in for regular service several times before the warranty expired and nothing was done about the tensioners. Even after the warranty expired and I continued to have it serviced there, I was never informed of the potential problem. When I had to have the front end bushings replaced while it was in for the 60,000 mile service the service manager mentioned that these cars were beginning to have wheel bearing issues and I should consider replacing them - at a cost of 500.00. I decided to wait a while and at 65,000 miles they failed while I was driving. It ended up costing 700.00 because of the damage. That was my problem, I had been warned. I did not like it but I certainly did not feel like Jaguar was responsible. The timing chain tensioner is a different story. If the service manager had told me that these things were subject to failure, and that the worst case result was a destroyed engine, I would have swallowed hard and paid to have it fixed. My complaint with Jaguar is that I was not given that opportunity. I am continuing in my efforts to convince Jaguar Cars that they have a

The Jaguar AJ-V8 engine

Strengths and weaknesses

The Jaguar V8 has now been used in both supercharged and normally aspirated versions in the XK, XJ, and S type ranges for some 8 years. Designed wholly by Jaguar, the 4.0 litre V8 was first introduced in 1997 using the now infamous Nikasil lining for the bores. Now 8 years later with more conventional cast iron liners the Jaguar V8 has a capacity of 4.2 litres developing up to 400bhp and there have been a number of technical changes incorporated making the engine both stronger and more reliable.

The original format of the engine has changed relatively little in real terms: - four valves per cylinder, twin overhead camshafts per head, Nikasil bores, slanted fracture split con-rods, 2 plane crankshaft running simplex timing chains. The original 4.0 litre had a stroke and bore of 86mm and this stroke has been extended to 90.3 mm to create the current 4.2 litre derivative. Head design achieved a very compact combustion chamber with the angle between inlet and exhaust valves being 28 degrees and the valve train masses were reduced as much as possible to minimise cam loads. Valve stems are only 5mm which is a dramatic reduction when compared to earlier Jaguar cylinder head design. All in all it is a lightweight, compact and efficient V8.

The original Jaguar 4.0 litre V8 suffers from very few basic problems that we have seen over the years. The problem relating to Nikasil is discussed at some length later in this article but other more minor problems are discussed below. Fundamentally the engine is very strong and any weaknesses have been designed out by Jaguar.

Head gaskets are now beginning to show their age and any overheating, coolant hose failure or loss of coolant needs careful diagnosis to ensure that the source of the problem is resolved. Early water pumps were prone to impellers breaking up with consequential overheating problems so the coolant system does need to be checked with these weaknesses in mind. Chemical test for CO in the coolant fluid is to be recommended at this stage to clarify head gasket failure.

Timing chain tensioners are another source of problems with Jaguar having revised the design of these items on a number of occasions. The camshafts have uneven phasing of the cams and this gives rise to irregular loads on the timing chain which in turn compromises the life of the tensioners. This has clearly been understood by Jaguar as in the design of the new 4.2 litre, the chains, tensioners and lubrication system have been changed and this should result in the problem being virtually eliminated in the 4.2 models. The new timing chain design incorporates Morse chains to handle the loads that presented problems for the original simplex items.

Occasionally the lubrication system fails, the bearings of No.1 big end suffering starvation due to low oil level. For this reason alone it is sensible to check the engine oil level on a regular basis as even a slight lowering of the level can cause loss of oil pressure on cornering. The 4.2 has a totally redesigned oil system utilising a central pickup and incorporating piston and timing chain oil jets to further aid lubrication and cooling.

Racing Green Cars are now able to offer a full engine rebuilding service on the Jaguar 4.0 V8 and are also able to offer an upgrade to the new, more sophisticated 4.2 litre as an option should the original 4.0 litre engine require replacement. Rebuilt engines no longer utilise Nikasil bores but revert back to the traditional lined approach. It is possible to recreate the ceramic bores but only in conjunction with new steel liners.

Thanks to everyone for their thoughts/comments/actions. We are all better for your efforts, even though you may think they were fruitless.

In closing Jag's are different, and to truly enjoy them you must know what the "difference" is. It simply can't be explained.

Jim S. USA

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19th Mar 2006, 12:42

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