

2008 SEP 23 PM 1:01

Cardiology

July 28, 2008

CL-10243689-4132

American Honda Motor Company
Honda Automobile Customer Service
Mail Stop 500-2N-7A
1919 Torrance Blvd.
Torrance, CA 90501-2746

Re: 2HKRL18012H [REDACTED]
2002 Odyssey EX van
Defective Replacement Transmission(s)

To Whom it May Concern:

My wife and I have been loyal Honda customers the past 24 years, beginning with the first of three Accords in 1984. Each Accord has been dependable, comfortable and efficient; they have been examples of Honda's advertised reliability. We have driven them in excess of 400,000 miles with only minor, expected maintenance issues.

Unfortunately, we have found an exception to Honda's reputation of anvil-reliability. Our 2002 Odyssey EX, purchased new at University Honda in Bowling Green has been a source of intermittent consternation.

To be sure, the Odyssey is an ideal family van and has managed to ferry us on many memorable trips. When it is not out of commission for days at a time undergoing repair, we are happy with almost every aspect of the van. However, almost alone among Hondas, this particular model has had persistent major problems with its automatic transmission. For us, the problem has recurred with EACH transmission installed to replace the original equipment. The initial transmission was the subject of a national recall (Honda Service Bulletin 04-021).

At that time our transmission became problematic at about 36,000 miles, and was promptly taken to the dealership. The tranny underwent the extensive analysis recommended in the Service Bulletin. Following some two weeks in the service bay, no easy fix was feasible and so it was replaced 6/11/03 (37,784 miles) at University Honda in Bowling Green.

But the initial recall and replacement was not the end of our problems. Several months later, my wife again noted the same issues that accompanied the death of the first transmission. On 2/4/05 (67,186 miles), the second transmission required replacement.

That THIRD transmission appeared stable, and in retrospect proved more durable than the two that preceded it. That is, until July 21st, when my wife began a routine visit to an outlet mall two hours away in Michigan. Nearing her destination some 200 miles from home, and without warning, the tachometer became irregular and her speed slowed - characteristic of the transmission failure she had already experienced twice before. She made it to a nearby service station with smoke billowing from around the motor (fortunately without injury) and was eventually towed to the Honda Dealer in Grand Blanc, MI.

Standard Vandy
Honda Associates
100 West Penn Street

Findlay, Ohio

FAX

AA
1:02
9/23/08
NJ

There, the transmission issue was diagnosed as an internal failure, and required replacement yet again. We now have our FOURTH transmission at 157,000 miles, plus an entirely unexpected and unbudgeted \$4000 replacement bill.

We had planned to drive the Odyssey beyond 250,000 miles, and the bulk of this van is very capable of that goal. But now we find ourselves in a major dilemma. This "newest" transmission is also remanufactured, as had the two previous models. What if the remanufactured transmissions are themselves defective? Based on our experience, this van is a "hot potato": it is reasonable to expect this tranny to fail due to an internal defect within the next 35 to 70 thousand miles and at a potentially very dangerous time.

So what to do? With that in mind, we are very uncomfortable selling the van to a family member knowing they will eventually face a major expense exceeding the value of the van while the bulk of the vehicle is still in good shape. Selling the vehicle to another unsuspecting consumer to us is not an entirely honest move as well. We worry about the continuing safety of a vehicle with a suspect transmission.

While the employees at the dealership were very accommodating, realistically they were not able to help us with the very substantial cost of re-re-replacement or control the internal quality of remanufactured transmissions. We are frankly discouraged by our unexpected reinvestment, one that makes the van a "hot potato", and deprives us of the cash needed to upgrade to another model. It also strongly encourages us to leave the Honda family as soon as possible.

Respectfully




Replacement dates:
6/11/03 37,784 miles
2/4/05 67,186 miles
7/24/08 157,000 miles

cc: Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

University Honda
1019 North Main St.
Bowling Green, OH 43402
(Attn: Todd in Service)