



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

26-JUN-2009

Repository

Reference No.

10275053

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name

mother of auto owner

Address

City

TYLER

State

TX

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 authorized representative, please sign as the vehicle manufacturer.

Signature of Owner

Date 7/19/2009

VEHICLE INFORMATION

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

1N4AL11D32C

Make

NISSAN

Model

ALTIMA

Model Year

2002

Date Purchased

Dealer's Name and Telephone Number

Peltier Nissan

Engine: 2.5 L

No: Cylinders

Fuel Type:

unleaded

Original Owner

Dealer's City

State

Zip Code

Transmission Type

Antilock Brakes

Powertrain

Multiple Failure:

Incident Date(s)

automatic

Cruise Control

12-JUN-2009

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Vehicle Component Code: 061000 ENGINE AND ENGINE COOLING: ENGINE

Failure Mileage

109250

Failure Speed

40

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: N/A

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: N/A

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

0

Number of Deaths

0

Reported to Police

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

TL\*THE CONTACT OWNS A 2002 NISSAN ALTIMA. WHILE DRIVING 40 MPH, THE CONTACT HEARD A CLICKING SOUND FOLLOWED BY A POPPING SOUND. SHE PULLED THE VEHICLE OVER AND NOTICED SMOKE COMING FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE VEHICLE. THE VEHICLE WAS TOWED TO THE DEALER AND THEY STATED THAT THE ENGINE NEEDED TO BE REPLACED DUE TO A LACK OF ENGINE OIL. THERE WERE NO WARNINGS PRIOR TO THE FAILURE. THE CURRENT AND FAILURE MILEAGES WERE 109,250.

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 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.

**Narrative Description of Incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies)**

Ball of fire shot out from under the vehicle, oil was changed on 5-21-09 and vehicle sat up from June 7-11, 2009 because daughter was with me on vacation in San Antonio, TX. We arrived back home on 6-12-09 and when daughter went to movies that night, that's when this incident occurred while she was returning home. Some motorists driving behind her pulled over to offer assistance and informed her they saw a big ball of fire shoot out underneath the car. We went out to her to check on the car and found there was no oil on dip stick.

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

U.S. Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, D.C. 20077-9382

Official Business Penalty for Private Use \$300



NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES



**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

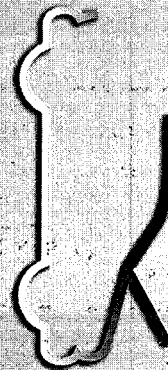
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 1888 WASHINGTON, DC

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

**US Department of Transportation  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
Office of Defects Investigation, NVS-210  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE.  
Washington, D.C. 20077-9382**



**Think your vehicle has a safety defect?**



**If so:**

**Use the enclosed form to file a report.**

**or visit:**

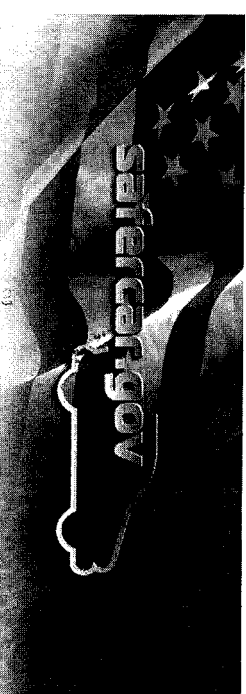
**www.safercar.gov**

**or call:**

**Vehicle Safety Hotline  
888-327-4236**



Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ)  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration



July 18, 2009

U.S. Dept. of Transportation  
National Highway Traffic Safety Adm.  
Office of Defects Investigation, NVS-210  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, D.C. 20077-9382

Re: NHTSA Complaint #10275053 VIN #1N4AL11D32C [REDACTED]

Dear Randy Chief,

This letter is response to your letter and Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire you sent. Your letter additionally requested any additional information I can send which leads me to believe that the damage to my daughter's car is the result of defect.

First of all, let's establish that there is a defect. **Document 1** enclosed is a letter from Frank Slaveter, Nissan, to Kenneth Weinstein, NHTSA, stating that 2002 and 2003 Nissan Altimas produced from August 1, 2001 to February 18, 2003 and 2002 Sentras equipped the 2.5 Liter engines are affected. According to The VIN check sheet I ordered, my daughter's car was built April, 2002 (**Document 2**) The defects described an exhaust pipe hanger pin may catch debris from the road which could ignite by contacting catalyst. The other defect is described as pre-catalyst overheating and substrate particles enter combustion chamber resulting in **INCREASED OIL CONSUMPTION AND FIRE** if owner does not check oil level. Twenty two days before date of incident, my daughter had her regularly scheduled oil change (**Document 3** enclosed). Five of those days her vehicle wasn't even driven because she was with me on vacation in San Antonio, TX. So the breakdown was sudden and without warning. My first suspicion was that the Fast Oil & Lube did not put the oil filter on tight or something. The owner came out to inspect to see if the loss of oil was due to something they failed to do. Before the owner came out, I had my brother-in-law look underneath the car to see if there were signs of oil leak in and around the oil pan and oil filter which he reported there was no sign of oil leakage. The oil change manager confirmed me this when he checked underneath the car. The Nissan dealership service manager did not identify this to be the problem as well. He also informed me that the rod shot through the block and the engine will need to replace for about \$4,000.

I could not understand how the vehicle could lose oil so fast to cause this damage so I did research on this and found this complaint had been involved in a NHTSA recall in 2002-2003. The problem with your recall #03V084000 (**Document 4**), it appears to focus more on the hanger pin and it was concluded with Nissan's stating it **will develop corrective action** to address the pre-catalyst engine damage and fires. There was no follow-up to assure that Nissan did develop corrective action and if any action was done, did it correct the problem. Another NHTSA document (**Document 5**) shows there a series of Nissan recall numbers to address the campaign problems; R3007, R3014, R3015, R3016, and R3017. Again, your document seems to address the hanger pin with no conclusive action to address the pre-catalyst problem. I do not know what all the R300 Nissan recall numbers mean but I did obtain a copy of Nissan dealership Vin check (**Document 6**) and found only one of the numbers (R30071) was done. The parts replaced do not seem to address all the concerns identified in your campaign.

Why is this important? When consumers contact Nissan North America and inform them of the problem, it appears that Nissan will tell people there is no recall addressing the problem and therefore, they will do nothing. Technically, they are correct. There is no specific recall addressing the pre-catalyst fires. Additionally, people who have had the work done on engines

replaced (AT THEIR EXPENSE) the engine many times will do it again. Even though you have numerous complaints already on file from consumers having this problem with their Nissan engines, there are even more out there on consumer complaint websites which include consumers who have had work done or engines replaced. Many of these complaints are within last 12 months. These are aluminum engines and apparently cannot hold up to everyday driving even with routine oil changes, repairs, and replacements. Consumers who replace the engine with another Nissan aluminum engine have the same problems. I have a 2002 Ford Windstar van with 173K miles on it and the engine is still going strong with regular oil changes. Obviously, the Nissan aluminum engines are defective and the consumers are getting robbed and are unsafe.

[http://www.carcomplaints.com/Nissan/Altima/2002/engine/excessive\\_oil\\_consumption.shtml](http://www.carcomplaints.com/Nissan/Altima/2002/engine/excessive_oil_consumption.shtml)

This website shows there are currently 113 complaints just for 2002 Altimas. Severity rating is "pretty bad". The bulk of these complaints are for years 2007, 2008, and 2009.

<http://www.aboutautomobile.com/Complaint/2002/Nissan/Altima>

This website shows 212 complaints regarding the same engine problem from January, 2008 to now. Of those 212 complaints, 69 were for year 2009.

The list goes on and on showing consumers all across America are having the exact same problem with these engines losing oil without notice and in some cases catching fire.

I sent you a letter on June 30, 2009 detailing all my concerns along with copies of letters sent to Nissan North America. I am unsure if you received my letter because a letter I sent to U.S. Dept. of Transportation at the same time with the correct address was returned to me. Please let me know if you are receiving the supporting documents I am sending you.

  
Tyler, TX

Cc: Consumer Affairs Complaint  
Federal Trade Commission Complaint



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Consumer:

NVS-216fb

As a follow-up to your report to the Vehicle Safety Hotline (VSH), we have recorded your information on the enclosed Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ) form. Please review the form and make changes, additions and corrections as necessary. Additionally, please provide a more detailed description of the failures(s) you reported that you believe relevant to safety. Also, if available, include copies of repair invoices, letters to the manufacturer, or any other document related to the problem(s) you reported. If a crash or fire occurred, include a copy of the police or fire department report.

It is helpful to be as thorough as possible in your report so that our ability to use your report will be maximized. If you do not have the information, it is not necessary to complete all the boxes. However, it is very difficult to identify the scope of a vehicle problem unless the vehicle identification number (VIN) is known. The VIN is located inside the vehicle on the dashboard adjacent to the left (driver's side) of the windshield pillar and on the drivers' door or the driver's door jam. It may also be listed on a dealer repair invoice or your insurance or registration cards. When reporting a tire problem, the brand name, tire line and complete tire size should be included. Be certain to provide the DOT tire identification number. It is usually located near the rim flange of the tire on either side of the tire.

We do not make your personal information (name, address, phone numbers, etc.) available to the general public. However, if we open an investigation that involves your vehicle, we will provide the manufacturer of your vehicle with a complete copy of your report. The information you provide may assist the manufacturer and NHTSA in determining if a safety-related defect exists.

Any information provided is entirely voluntary. There is no consequence or penalty of any kind if you do not wish to provide it. We seek this information to develop both statistical and investigative evidence that will help identify potential safety related problems in vehicles or vehicle equipment, e.g., tires, child safety seats, jacks, etc.

When completed, please fold and staple or tape the form so that the pre-addressed portion of the form is on the outside. If a larger envelope is used, tape the VOQ form to the larger envelope so that the pre-addressed portion of the form is showing.

If further assistance is needed, please contact the VSH at their toll-free number, 1-888-327-4236.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Randy Reid Chief  
Correspondence Research Division  
Office of Defects Investigation  
Enforcement

Enclosure: VOQ



Document 1

**NISSAN**

**NISSAN NORTH AMERICA, INC.**

Corporate Office  
18001 South Figueroa St.  
Gardena, California 90248-4600  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 191  
Gardena, California 90248-0191  
Telephone: 810.532.8111

March 7, 2003

03V-084 ① of ③

Mr. Kenneth Weinstein  
Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

We are transmitting the enclosed Defect Information Report in accordance with 49 CFR Part 573. A voluntary recall campaign will be initiated and your office provided with the notices. Nissan currently plans to begin owner notification in May 2003.

Very truly,



Frank D. Slaveter  
Senior Manager,  
Technical Compliance

Encl.

OFFICE OF DEFECTS  
INVESTIGATION  
2003 MAR 11 P 2:21  
RECEIVED

## **DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT**

03V-084 ② or ③

1. **Manufacturer:**

Nissan North America, Inc.

2. **Vehicles Potentially Involved:**

2002 and 2003 model year Nissan Altima vehicles equipped with the 2.5 Liter engine produced from August 1, 2001 (start of production) to February 18, 2003, and 2002 model year Sentra vehicles equipped with the 2.5 Liter engine produced from September 27, 2001 (start of production) to July 19, 2002. Vehicles manufactured after these dates are not affected.

3. **Total Number of Vehicles Potentially Involved:**

Approximately 268,000.

4. **Percentage of Vehicles Estimated to Actually Contain the Defect:**

Unknown

5. **Description of the Defect:**

For 2002 and 2003 model year Altima vehicles equipped with the 2.5 Liter engine, the exhaust pipe hanger pin may catch debris from the road which could be ignited by contact with the main catalyst.

In addition, for 2002 model year Altima and Sentra vehicles equipped with the 2.5 Liter engine, certain engine operating conditions may cause the pre-catalyst to overheat and damage the catalyst substrate. If substrate particles enter the combustion chamber, they may score the cylinder walls, resulting in increased oil consumption. If the engine oil level is not checked on a periodic basis as specified in the Owner's Manual and drops below the low level, and the driver continues to operate the vehicle ignoring noticeable engine noise, engine damage may occur which could result in a fire.

6. **Chronology of Principal Events**

October 23, 2002 – NHTSA sent an information request concerning reports of alleged engine compartment fires on 2002 Altima vehicles equipped with the 2.5 Liter engine.

**October 2002 – February 2003 – Nissan conducted an investigation to determine the cause of the fires and identify affected vehicles.**

**February 28, 2003 – Nissan determined that a safety related defect may exist and that a recall campaign should be conducted.**

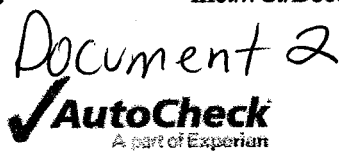
**7. Description of Corrective Action:**

**Nissan plans to begin notifying owners of potentially affected vehicles in May 2003. On Altimas, the protruding portion of the exhaust pipe hanger pin will be removed. Nissan is now developing a plan to address the pre-catalyst on 2002 Altimas and Sentras. Details of this plan will be provided when they are finalized.**

**In addition to the corrective action, in order to reduce the risk of fire in the event of poor or improper maintenance that could result in oil spillage, heat shield(s) will be installed on the pre-catalyst and exhaust tube.**

**8. Copy of Notices:**

**Copies of all notices will be provided to NHTSA as they become available.**



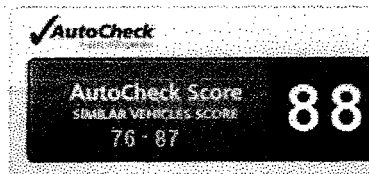
# AutoCheck Vehicle History Report

## 2002 Nissan Altima Base / S / SL

Report Run Date: 2009-06-15 20:45:54.214 EDT

VIN:	1N4AL11D32C [REDACTED]
Year :	2002
Make :	Nissan
Model:	Altima Base / S / SL
Style/Body:	Sedan 4D
Class:	Mid Range Car - Standard
Engine:	2.5L I4 EFI
Country of Assembly:	United States
Vehicle Age:	7 year(s)
Calculated Owners:	2
Last Reported Odometer Reading:	47,528

### This AutoCheck Score



The AutoCheck Score is a summary of your vehicle's history, letting you compare vehicles with ease.

### This vehicle qualifies for Buyback Protection



Safeguard your investment with AutoCheck Buyback Protection, which reduces the risk in buying a used vehicle.

### Section summaries

The vehicle identification number you submitted has been analyzed and summary information on your car is shown below.

- Title and ProblemCheck:  Your vehicle checks out!
- OdometerCheck:  Your vehicle checks out!
- Vehicle Use and EventCheck:  Specific vehicle use(s) or events reported
- Full History:  Detailed information available

### Title and ProblemCheck



Your vehicle checks out! AutoCheck's database for this 2002 Nissan Altima Base / S / SL (1N4AL11D32C [REDACTED]) shows no negative titles or other problems. When reported to AutoCheck, these events can indicate serious past damage or other significant problems.

0 Problem(s) Reported: 15 Title/Problem areas checked:

- No abandoned title record
- No damaged title or major damage incident record
- No fire damaged title record
- No grey market title record
- No hail damage title record
- No insurance loss title record

- No emission/safety inspection record
- Loan/Lien record(s)
- No fire damage incident record
- No repossessed record
- No theft record
- No storm area registration/title record

## Full History

Below are the historical events for this vehicle listed in chronological order. Any discrepancies will be in bold text.

Report Run Date: 2009-06-15 20:45:54.214 EDT

Vehicle: 2002 Nissan Altima Base / S / SL (1N4AL11D32C [REDACTED])

Event Date	Event Location	Odometer Reading	Data Source	Event Detail
04/02/2002	TX		Independent Source	VEHICLE MANUFACTURED AND SHIPPED TO DEALER
01/28/2003	TYLER, TX		Motor Vehicle Dept.	REGISTRATION EVENT/RENEWAL
02/05/2003	TYLER, TX	25	Motor Vehicle Dept.	TITLE (Title #:21220037647114349) (Lien Reported)
01/03/2005	TYLER, TX		Motor Vehicle Dept.	REGISTRATION EVENT/RENEWAL
01/01/2006	TYLER, TX		Motor Vehicle Dept.	REGISTRATION EVENT/RENEWAL
09/13/2006	TYLER, TX	47,528	Service Contract Company	SERVICE CONTRACT ISSUED
10/03/2006	TYLER, TX	47,528	Motor Vehicle Dept.	TITLE (Title #:21220038983085813) (Lien Reported)
01/01/2007	TYLER, TX		Motor Vehicle Dept.	REGISTRATION EVENT/RENEWAL
01/01/2008	TYLER, TX		Motor Vehicle Dept.	REGISTRATION EVENT/RENEWAL
01/05/2009	TYLER, TX		Motor Vehicle Dept.	REGISTRATION EVENT/RENEWAL

## This Vehicle's Glossary

Below are the specific definitions for events that appear in this vehicle's report. More information is available in the full AutoCheck glossary.

Term	Section Location	Definition
Loan/Lien	Vehicle Use and EventCheck	A loan/lien is the legal right to take and hold or sell the vehicle of a debtor as security or payment for a debt. Normally, a vehicle will have a lien due to a loan or unpaid repair bill against the vehicle. Check with the seller to ensure that the lien has been satisfied.

### AutoCheck vehicle history report Terms and Conditions

This report, and any reliance upon it, is subject to AutoCheck Terms and Conditions. If you obtained the report from a dealer, the dealer has been provided with these Terms & Conditions and can share them with you. These AutoCheck Terms and Conditions are also available at any time at [www.autocheck.com/consumers/disclaimer.do](http://www.autocheck.com/consumers/disclaimer.do) or by writing to Experian: Experian Automotive C/O AutoCheck Customer Service 955 American Lane Schaumburg IL 60173

Document 3

FAST OIL & LUBE  
5030 HWY. 31 W.  
TYLER TX 75709  
(903) 597-5577

\*REPRINT\*

05/21/2009 12:42  
00101-21276-  
09052100212764  
NT BS NT

TYLER, TX

2002  
NISSAN/DATSUN  
ALTIMA  
4cyl 2.5L FI

NYW621  
109250

05/21/09 109250 FS EW

2. OIL FILTER	REPLACED	FULL SERVICE OIL CHANGE	1.00	33.95
3. CHASSIS LUBRICATION	REPLACED	PZ37 OIL FILTER	1.00	0.00
4. REAR DIFFERENTIAL FLUID	COMPLETED	PENNZOIL 5/30 MOTOR OIL	4.20	0.00
5. TRANS/TRANSAXLE FLUID	FRT WHL DR	ENVIRONMENTAL CHARGE	1.00	1.00
6. CHECK TIRE PRESSURE	FULL	TOUCH FREE-EXPRESS WASH	1.00	5.00
7. WIPER BLADES	F 32 R 32			
8. AIR FILTER	CHECKED OK			
9. BREATHER FILTER	CHECKED OK			
10. PCV VALVE	N/A			
11. BRAKE FLUID	CHECKED OK			
12. POWER STEERING FLUID	FULL			
13. VACUUM FRONT FLOOR MAT	FULL			
14. RADIATOR FLUID	COMPLETED			
15. WINDSHIELD WASHER FLUID	CHECKED OK			
16. WASH FRONT WINDSHIELD	ADDED			
	COMPLETED			

SUBTOTAL	39.95
TOTAL	39.95
CCARD	39.95

\*\* DUPLICATE \*\*

Recommend next service on AUGUST 19, 2009 or 112250 miles.  
PRAY FOR OUR TROOPS!!!

VISA  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
jw XX-XX  
0.00

Document 4



## OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION (ODI)

### Defects - Search Results

1 Record(s) Displayed.

Report Date : **June 29, 2009 at 11:39 AM**

Search Type : **VEHICLE**

Year : **2002**

Make : **NISSAN**

Model : **ALTIMA**

**NHTSA Action Number:**

PE02078

**NHTSA Recall Campaign**

**Number:**  
03V084000

**Model:** ALTIMA

**Make:** NISSAN

**Manufacturer :** NISSAN NORTH AMERICA, INC.

**Year :** 2002

**Component :**

ENGINE AND ENGINE COOLING:EXHAUST SYSTEM

ENGINE AND ENGINE COOLING:EXHAUST SYSTEM:EMISSION CONTROL:CATALYTIC CONVERTOR

**Date Investigation Opened :** October 18, 2002

**Date Investigation Closed :** March 25, 2003

**Summary:**

THE OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION (ODI) OPENED THIS INVESTIGATION ON OCTOBER 18, 2002 BASED ON THREE REPORTS INDICATING THAT THE ENGINE COMPARTMENT IN MODEL YEAR (MY) 2002 NISSAN ALTIMA VEHICLES EQUIPPED WITH THE 2.5 LITER ENGINE CAUGHT ON FIRE WITHOUT ANY WARNING TO THE DRIVER WHILE THE VEHICLE WAS DRIVEN AT HIGHWAY SPEEDS. ONE NON-BURN RELATED INJURY WAS REPORTED AS A RESULT OF THE COMPLAINANT EXITING THE VEHICLE IN HASTE AFTER IT HAD CAUGHT ON FIRE. NISSAN DISCOVERED THAT ONE OF THE HANGER PINS WHICH HOLDS EXHAUST PIPE IN PLACE MAY CATCH DEBRIS FROM THE ROAD. IF THE DEBRIS WERE TO COME IN CONTACT WITH THE MAIN CATALYST, A FIRE COULD RESULT. THIS CONDITION IS ALSO PRESENT IN MY 2003 NISSAN ALTIMA VEHICLES BUILT THRU FEBRUARY 18, 2003. NISSAN ALSO STATED IN ITS DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT THAT ON MY 2002 ALTIMAS AND SENTRAS (EQUIPPED WITH THE 2.5-LITER ENGINE) THAT CERTAIN OPERATING CONDITIONS MAY CAUSE THE PRE-CATALYST TO OVERHEAT, WHICH WOULD CAUSE CATALYST SUBSTRATE PARTICLES TO FLOW INTO THE ENGINE. THESE PARTICLES CAN SCORE THE CYLINDER WALLS WHICH RESULTS IN INCREASE OIL CONSUMPTION. IF THE ENGINE OIL LEVEL IS LOW, ENGINE NOISE AND DAMAGE CAN OCCUR WHICH COULD RESULT IN A FIRE. THE RECALL INCLUDES 268,000 MY 2002-2003 ALTIMAS AND 2002 SENTRAS EQUIPPED WITH THE 2.5-LITER ENGINE. TO CORRECT THE CONDITION NISSAN WILL REMOVE THE PROTRUDING PORTION OF THE EXHAUST PIN ON THE ALTIMAS. NISSAN IS DEVELOPING A CORRECTIVE ACTION TO ADDRESS THE PRE-CATALYST. IN ADDITION TO THE CORRECTIVE ACTION, NISSAN WILL INSTALL HEAT SHIELDS ON THE PRE-CATALYST AND THE SURROUNDING EXHAUST TUBING. NISSAN WILL BEGIN OWNER NOTIFICATION IN MAY OF 2003.

Document 5

**Make:** NISSAN

**Model:** ALTIMA

**Model Year:** 2002

**Manufacturer:** NISSAN NORTH AMERICA, INC.

**Mfr's Report Date:** MAR 07, 2003

**NHTSA CAMPAIGN ID Number:** 03V084000

**NHTSA Action Number:** PE02078

**Component:** ENGINE AND ENGINE COOLING:EXHAUST SYSTEM:MANIFOLD/HEADER/MUFFLER/TAIL PIPE

**Potential Number of Units Affected:** 338000

**Summary:**

ON CERTAIN VEHICLES EQUIPPED WITH THE 2.5 LITER ENGINE, THE EXHAUST PIPE HANGER PIN MAY CATCH DEBRIS FROM THE ROAD THAT COULD BE IGNITED BY CONTACT WITH THE MAIN CATALYST. ALSO ON 2002 ALTIMA AND SENTRA VEHICLES, CERTAIN ENGINE OPERATING CONDITIONS MAY CAUSE THE PRE-CATALYST TO OVERHEAT AND DAMAGE THE CATALYST SUBSTRATE.

**Consequence:**

EITHER OF THESE TWO CONDITIONS COULD RESULT IN A FIRE.

**Remedy:**

DEALERS WILL REMOVE THE PROTRUDING PORTION OF THE EXHAUST PIPE HANGER PIN. IN ADDITION TO THE CORRECTIVE ACTION, IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE RISK OF FIRE IN THE EVENT OF POOR OR IMPROPER MAINTENANCE THAT COULD RESULT IN OIL SPILLAGE, HEAT SHIELD(S) WILL BE INSTALLED ON THE PRE-CATALYST AND EXHAUST TUBE. OWNER NOTIFICATION BEGAN ON JULY 28, 2003. OWNERS WHO TAKE THEIR VEHICLES TO AN AUTHORIZED DEALER ON AN AGREED UPON SERVICE DATE AND DO NOT RECEIVE THE FREE REMEDY WITHIN A REASONABLE TIME SHOULD CONTACT NISSAN AT 1-800-647-7261 (NISSAN RECALL NOS. R3007, R3014, R3015, R3016, R3017) ALSO ON 2002 ALTIMA AND SENTRA VEHICLES, CERTAIN ENGINE OPERATING CONDITIONS MAY CAUSE THE PRE-CATALYST TO OVERHEAT AND DAMAGE THE CATALYST SUBSTRATE. IF SUBSTRATE PARTICLES ENTER THE COMBUSTION CHAMBER, THEY COULD SCORE THE CYLINDER WALLS, RESULTING IN INCREASED OIL CONSUMPTION. IF THE ENGINE OIL LEVEL IS NOT CHECKED ON A PERIODIC BASIS AND DROPS BELOW THE LOW LEVEL, AND THE DRIVER CONTINUES TO OPERATE THE VEHICLE IGNORING NOTICEABLE ENGINE NOISE, ENGINE DAMAGE MAY OCCUR WHICH COULD RESULT IN A FIRE. THE PRE-CATALYST WILL BE TESTED TO ENSURE IT IS WORKING PROPERLY AND REPLACED IF NECESSARY. IF DAMAGE IS FOUND INSIDE THE PRE-CATALYST, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO REPLACE THE ENGINE.

**Notes:**

CUSTOMERS CAN ALSO CONTACT THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION'S AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE AT 1-888-DASH-2-DOT (1-888-327-4236).

Document Search

Check to Request Research. Submit below.

Document 6.

S E R V I C E - C O M M

06/29/09 15:49:55

CICSWB08

FIVE YEARS CLAIM HISTORY

WARRANTY CLAIM DATA

VIN: 1N4AL11D32C

RO DATE: 11/25/03 RO NBR: \*44401 SERVICING DEALER: PELTIER NISSAN

MILEAGE: 15,701

TYLER

TX

PNC: R3007 '02-'03 L31 QR25 ENGINE CAMP

SUBLET: 0.00

OPERATIONS: R30071 LABOR OP #1

PARTS REPLACED:

1102601M02	WASHER-DRAIN
152089E000	FILTER OIL
A65908J025	COVER EXHAUST MANIFOLD
LOCALENOIL	ENOIL DESCRIPTION

ENTER = CONTINUE N = NEXT VEHICLE M = RETURN TO SERVICE-COMM MENU>

Subj: **REFERENCE #6477261**  
Date: 6/16/2009 12:31:30 PM Central Standard Time  
From: [REDACTED]  
To: [nnaconsumeraffairs@nissan-usa.com](mailto:nnaconsumeraffairs@nissan-usa.com)  
CC: [REDACTED]

NISSAN NORTH AMERICA, INC.  
Corporate Office  
P. O. Box 191  
Gardena, CA 90246-0191

Re: Reference #6519769

Attn: Daryl Brown

Dear Mr. Brown,

Please accept this letter as follow-up to our telephone conversation on June 15, 2009 regarding the incident involving my daughter's car (VIN # 1N4AL11D32C [REDACTED] which lost all of its oil causing damage to engine and catching fire. This car was purchased from Peltier Nissan Dealership in Tyler, Texas on September 13, 2006.

As per your instructions, I paid Campbell towing service \$105 to tow the car to Peltier Nissan dealership where she purchased her car to have the problem diagnosed. A service representative there named John Matthews informed me that the engine will need to be replaced. He states that due to vehicle having no oil it caused the rod to go through the engine block. I informed John that this vehicle was part of a recall involving engines losing oil and catching fire but he insists he cannot find a recall involving this vehicle. I called National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and a representative informed me that there about 12 recalls active for this vehicle but John states he has access to this same information and he is not seeing a recall for this vehicle.

I researched this recall information and have listed the data I found below:

10/18/2002, U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issued ODI Resume report #PE 02-078 which addressed problems with this particular engine catching fire without warning while the vehicle was driven at highway speed. (Link: <http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/defect/results.cfm>) The report appears to specifically address a hanger pin but also include overheating of pre-catalyst which will causes the engine to increase oil consumption and result in fire. Unfortunately, NHTSA appeared to drop the ball here with concluding that at Nissan's word, Nissan will develop corrective action to address the pre-catalyst. I will address this oversight in my separate complaint against NHTSA because it appears that consumers are still having this problem with Nissan aluminum engines as recent as this year.

NHTSA Campaign ID Number 03V084000 was established to address these problems. Again, Nissan recall numbers R3007, R3014, R3015, R3016, and R3017 seem to address the hanger pin but in this campaign number, the issue of catalyst substrate was included in this campaign. This is where I believe Nissan is using to avoid addressing this problem. When speaking to Nissan representatives, they insist they are not finding recalls for the engine oil consumption and fires. Again, NHTSA and Federal Motor Vehicle Safety agency will need to address this with me separately.

Irregardless, a review of a letter from Frank Slavete3r, Nissan North America to Kenneth Weinstein of NHTSA with a copy of Defect Information Report (03V-084) documents the 2002 Altimas equipped with the 2.5 Liter engine may cause the pre-catalyst to overheat and damage the catalyst substrate. If substrate particles enter the combustion chamber, they may score the cylinder walls, resulting in increased oil consumption causing the oil level to drop and resulting in fire. I remind you that my daughter had just had her oil changed on May 21, 2009 and the car was not driven from June 7 through June 12, 2009 because she was with me on vacation in San Antonio. While driving the car home from a movie the night of June 12, 2009 she reports that the vehicle begin to lose power, she heard a 'pop', the 'check engine light came on', the car began smoking and caught fire. The car was left on side of highway and we checked the fluid levels the next morning and discovered there was not a drop of oil in the car and the heads were damaged. Oil did not leak from oil pan or oil filter but the oil was gone within the vehicle somehow. Technically, 22 days after her oil change, the vehicle lost every drop of oil that was in it. This is the problem identified in the NHTSA reports.

I also searched Wikipedia on Nissan QR engines and found this information. The motors are aluminum. Link: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nissan\\_QR\\_engine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nissan_QR_engine) states:

The QR25DE sold in the United States has been subject to a significant number of problems in its short lifetime. A variety of mechanical flaws have led to numerous technical service bulletins, recalls, repairs, and outright engine replacements.

" Vehicles with the QR25DE may ingest material from a damaged pre-catalyst resulting in increased oil consumption.[7]

" Power valve screws in the intake manifold may become loose and result in unstable idling or power loss.[8]

" In June 2006, it came to Nissan's attention that approximately 85,000 Altimas and 2,000 Sentra SE-Rs equipped with the QR25DE and built between January and May 2006 may experience unusually high oil consumption. This can lead to premature engine failure and possibly a fire. While Nissan investigates the problem, owners of the affected vehicles are being advised to check their oil frequently (every 700 mi (1,100 km) [1127 km]), and dealers have been instructed to place the affected vehicles on sales hold.[9]

I also researched Forums.Altimas.org and found Campaign Bulletin (Reference #NTB03-070) which shows that the VIN of my daughter's Altima was included in this campaign. Link: <http://forums.altimas.org/zerthread/31293>. It states:

#### CAMPAIGN BULLETIN

Reference:

NTB03-070

#### VOLUNTARY RECALL CAMPAIGN

ALTIMA AND SENTRA QR25DE ENGINE EXHAUST PIPE

HANGER PIN AND PRE-CATALYST

APPLIED VEHICLES: 2002-03 Altima (L31), QR25DE Engine

2002-04 Sentra (B15), QR25DE Engine

APPLIED VIN Altima: 1N4AL11\*\*2C100000 - 294952

1N4AL11\*\*2C700001 - 719020

1N4AL11\*\*3C100003 - 311983

Sentra: 3N AB51\*\*2L700019 - 730181

3N1AB51\*\*3L716572 - 736783

3N1AB51\*\*4L727627 - 730593

3N1AB51\*\*4L736618 - 738436

NOTE: Use Service Comm to determine campaign eligibility and to obtain the vehicle-specific PNC code.

INTRODUCTION

Nissan has determined that some 2002-2003 model year Altima and 2002-2004 model year Sentra vehicles equipped with the 2.5 liter engine have defects that relate to motor vehicle safety. For 2002-2003 model year Altimas, there is a possibility that the exhaust pipe hanger pin may catch debris from the road that could be ignited by contact with the catalytic converter and cause a fire. In addition, for 2002-2003 model year Altimas and 2002-2004 model year Sentras, there is a possibility that certain engine operating conditions may cause damage to the pre-catalyst. Material from inside a damaged pre-catalyst could enter the engine and result in increased oil consumption. If the engine oil level is not checked on a periodic basis and drops below the low level, and the driver continues to operate the vehicle ignoring noticeable engine noise, engine damage may occur which could result in a fire.

This link also states:

#### Reason for Recall

There is a possibility that the exhaust pipe hanger pin may catch debris from the road that could be ignited by contact with the catalytic converter and cause a fire. In addition, there is a possibility that certain engine operating conditions may cause damage to the pre-catalyst. Material from inside a damaged pre-catalyst could enter the engine and result in increased oil consumption.

This link states:

#### What Nissan Will Do

In order to prevent these incidents from occurring, your Nissan dealer will shorten the exhaust pipe hanger pin. The dealer will also reprogram the electronic control module to prevent any future damage to the pre-catalyst. In addition, the dealer will install heat shields on certain components of the exhaust system on vehicles that do not already have them. This free service should take about three hours to complete, but your Nissan dealer may require your vehicle for a longer period of time based upon the dealer's work schedule. The pre-catalyst will be tested to ensure it is working properly and replaced if necessary. If damage is found inside the pre-catalyst, it will be necessary to replace the engine. Nissan anticipates that few engines will need to be replaced. If the engine needs to be replaced, this also will be free of charge and will take several days. In this case, a car rental allowance is available from your Nissan dealer upon request.

Link: [http://www.consumeraction.gov/caw\\_automobiles\\_warranties\\_lemon.shtml](http://www.consumeraction.gov/caw_automobiles_warranties_lemon.shtml) states

Sometimes a manufacturer makes a design or production mistake on a motor vehicle. A service bulletin notifies the dealer of the problem and how to resolve it. Because these free repairs are not publicized, they are called "secret warranties." The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration maintains a database of service bulletins filed by manufacturers. If you have a problem with a vehicle that is a safety hazard, check whether the manufacturer has recalled your vehicle. Click on Recalls or call NHTSA at 1-800-424-9393. Hazards that aren't listed should be reported to your dealer, the manufacturer of the vehicle, and NHTSA. If a safety-related defect exists, the maker must fix it at no cost to you-even if your warranty has expired.

Link: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/standards/recompendium.pdf> states

Note: I conducted a VIN search on this vehicle and this car was never serviced under the recall program which means the engine in this car is the original engine involved in all recall programs for this Altima. This link also states:

Technically, this car should have never been sold to by daughter without correction of the hazardous defects already identified by Nissan and UHTSA.

This link also states:

This indicates that not only the damage to my daughter's car be done free of charge that the repair must be durable. In other words, replacing the engine with another engine with the same problem will probably not be suitable. The Link states:

Again, the VIN search shows this vehicle was never serviced.

In conclusion, I believe I have provided adequate information to show that my daughter's vehicle possessed the ORIGINAL defected components identified in the NHTSA/Nissan recall campaigns, was never serviced prior to her purchase of the defected vehicle, was the underlying problem of engine damage, and meets criteria for replacement and repair without charge to my daughter. According to the consumer protection regulations listed in this document, we are requesting that replacements be done free of charge and rental car be provided for her to go to work or reimburse her money paid on this car and retrieve the car. Also request reimbursement of \$105 tow charge I paid to have vehicle towed to Peltier Nissan per your instructions to diagnose damage. Requesting approval of my terms and John Matthews be notified that remedies required is approved and free of charge to us. Thank you in advance for your attention in this matter.

[REDACTED]  
Tyler, TX  
[REDACTED]

cc: Personal Reference for U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; U. S. Dept. of Transportation; and Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and Regulations

June 30, 2009

RE: Attn: Tammy Mayne, Consumer Affairs Regional Supervisor  
Complaint # 6519769

Ms. Mayne,

This is follow-up to our telephone conversation on 6-19-09. During this call you informed me that Nissan North America will not replace engine to my daughter's vehicle because recall work had been done on the vehicle. I am writing to inform you that the recall work was not done according to the established recall by NHTSA Campaign #03V084000. See insert below:

---

<b>Make:</b> NISSAN	<b>Model:</b> ALTIMA
<b>Model Year:</b> 2002	
<b>Manufacturer:</b> NISSAN NORTH AMERICA, INC.	<b>Mfr's Report Date:</b> MAR 07, 2003
<b>NHTSA CAMPAIGN ID Number:</b> 03V084000	<b>NHTSA Action Number:</b> PE02078
<b>Component:</b> ENGINE AND ENGINE COOLING:EXHAUST SYSTEM:MANIFOLD/HEADER/MUFFLER/TAIL PIPE	
<b>Potential Number of Units Affected:</b> 338000	

**Summary:**

ON CERTAIN VEHICLES EQUIPPED WITH THE 2.5 LITER ENGINE, THE EXHAUST PIPE HANGER PIN MAY CATCH DEBRIS FROM THE ROAD THAT COULD BE IGNITED BY CONTACT WITH THE MAIN CATALYST. ALSO ON 2002 ALTIMA AND SENTRA VEHICLES, CERTAIN ENGINE OPERATING CONDITIONS MAY CAUSE THE PRE-CATALYST TO OVERHEAT AND DAMAGE THE CATALYST SUBSTRATE.

**Consequence:**

EITHER OF THESE TWO CONDITIONS COULD RESULT IN A FIRE.

**Remedy:**

DEALERS WILL REMOVE THE PROTRUDING PORTION OF THE EXHAUST PIPE HANGER PIN. IN ADDITION TO THE CORRECTIVE ACTION, IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE RISK OF FIRE IN THE EVENT OF POOR OR IMPROPER MAINTENANCE THAT COULD RESULT IN OIL SPILLAGE, HEAT SHIELD(S) WILL BE INSTALLED ON THE PRE-CATALYST AND EXHAUST TUBE. OWNER NOTIFICATION BEGAN ON JULY 28, 2003. OWNERS WHO TAKE THEIR VEHICLES TO AN AUTHORIZED DEALER ON AN AGREED UPON SERVICE DATE AND DO NOT RECEIVE THE FREE REMEDY WITHIN A REASONABLE TIME SHOULD CONTACT NISSAN AT 1-800-647-7261. NISSAN RECALL NOS. R3007, R3014, R3015, R3016, R3017. ALSO ON 2002 ALTIMA AND SENTRA VEHICLES, CERTAIN ENGINE OPERATING CONDITIONS MAY CAUSE THE PRE-CATALYST TO OVERHEAT AND DAMAGE THE CATALYST SUBSTRATE. IF SUBSTRATE PARTICLES ENTER THE COMBUSTION CHAMBER, THEY COULD SCORE THE CYLINDER WALLS, RESULTING IN INCREASED OIL CONSUMPTION. IF THE ENGINE OIL LEVEL IS NOT CHECKED ON A PERIODIC BASIS AND DROPS BELOW THE LOW LEVEL, AND THE DRIVER CONTINUES TO OPERATE THE VEHICLE IGNORING NOTICEABLE ENGINE NOISE, ENGINE DAMAGE MAY OCCUR WHICH COULD RESULT IN A FIRE. THE PRE-CATALYST WILL BE TESTED TO ENSURE IT IS WORKING PROPERLY AND REPLACED IF NECESSARY. IF DAMAGE IS FOUND INSIDE THE PRE-CATALYST, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO REPLACE THE ENGINE.

**Notes:**

CUSTOMERS CAN ALSO CONTACT THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION'S AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE AT 1-888-DASH-2-DOT (1-888-327-4236).

I went to Peltier Nissan dealership yesterday, 6-29-09, to retrieve daughter's vehicle and also requested a recall report on her VIN number. This is what the dealership gave me:

S E R V I C E - C O M M

06/29/09 15:49:55

CICSWB08

FIVE YEARS CLAIM HISTORY

WARRANTY CLAIM DATA

VIN: 1N4AL11D32C

RO DATE: 11/25/03 RO NBR: \*44401 SERVICING DEALER: PELTIER NISSAN

MILEAGE: 15,701

TYLER

TX 75711

PNC: R3007 '02-'03 L31 QR25 ENGINE CAMP

SUBLET: 0.00

OPERATIONS: R30071 LABOR OP #1

PARTS REPLACED:

1102601M02	WASHER-DRAIN
152089E000	FILTER OIL
A65908J025	COVER EXHAUST MANIFOLD
LOCALENOIL	ENOIL DESCRIPTION

ENTER = CONTINUE N = NEXT VEHICLE M = RETURN TO SERVICE-COMM MENU>

As you can see, in accordance to the NHTSA campaign requirements, Nissan recall numbers R3007, R3014, R3015, R3016, and R3017 should address the problem of loss oil and fire. The document from Nissan dealership shows this was not done. The document reflects only one of the Nissan recall codes R30071 and not the others. The work listed does not reflect all work required to meet the NHTSA campaign requirements.

I provided you copy of documentation from Frank Slaveter, Senior Manager of Technical Compliance of Nissan North America to Kenneth Weinstein of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration describing the defects of the 2002 and 2003 Altimas and Sentras. Here is the portion of that document:

## **DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT**

03V-084 ② of ③

1. **Manufacturer:**

Nissan North America, Inc.

2. **Vehicles Potentially Involved:**

2002 and 2003 model year Nissan Altima vehicles equipped with the 2.5 Liter engine produced from August 1, 2001 (start of production) to February 18, 2003, and 2002 model year Sentra vehicles equipped with the 2.5 Liter engine produced from September 27, 2001 (start of production) to July 19, 2002. Vehicles manufactured after these dates are not affected.

3. **Total Number of Vehicles Potentially Involved:**

Approximately 268,000.

4. **Percentage of Vehicles Estimated to Actually Contain the Defect:**

Unknown

5. **Description of the Defect:**

For 2002 and 2003 model year Altima vehicles equipped with the 2.5 Liter engine, the exhaust pipe hanger pin may catch debris from the road which could be ignited by contact with the main catalyst.

In addition, for 2002 model year Altima and Sentra vehicles equipped with the 2.5 Liter engine, certain engine operating conditions may cause the pre-catalyst to overheat and damage the catalyst substrate. If substrate particles enter the combustion chamber, they may score the cylinder walls, resulting in increased oil consumption. If the engine oil level is not checked on a periodic basis as specified in the Owner's Manual and drops below the low level, and the driver continues to operate the vehicle ignoring noticeable engine noise, engine damage may occur which could result in a fire.

6. **Chronology of Principal Events**

October 23, 2002 - NHTSA sent an information request concerning reports of alleged engine compartment fires on 2002 Altima vehicles equipped with the 2.5 Liter engine.

I reiterate from my previous memo to you, that I have provided enough documentation to show that my daughter's vehicle is equipped with the original defected engine and the required recall work has not been performed to prevent failure and fire of her engine. As stated in my previous memo to you, I am requesting that Nissan North America approve repair of damages to my daughter's vehicle FREE OF CHARGE, reimburse my towing fee, and that the work will be durable to not happen again. I request response from Nissan North America as follow up to complaints I have filed with NHTSA (Complaint #10275053), Federal Trade Commission (Reference #23229601, and to United States Consumers Affairs Agency. My Nissan Consumer Affairs Complaint to you (#6519769) has not been resolved.

  
Tyler, TX  


CC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
Department of Transportation  
Federal Trade Commission  
Consumer Affairs



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Top 10 Problem Vehicles

1. 2002 Ford Explorer
2. 2003 Ford Explorer
3. 2004 Ford Explorer
4. 2003 Honda Accord
5. 2001 Honda Civic
6. 2002 Chevrolet Impala
7. 2008 Honda Accord
8. 2004 Ford F-150
9. 2000 Dodge Intrepid
10. 2001 Dodge Ram 1500

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# 2002 Nissan Altima

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blown head gasket	[ 11 complaints ]	? more info
catalytic converter	[ 9 complaints ]	? more info
runs roughly, engine shaking	[ 8 complaints ]	? more info
stalls while driving	[ 4 complaints ]	? more info
catalytic converter failed	[ 3 complaints ]	? more info
stalls, check engine light on	[ 3 complaints ]	? more info
white smoke coming from the exhaust pipe	[ 3 complaints ]	? more info
won't start	[ 3 complaints ]	? more info
excessive knocking	[ 2 complaints ]	? more info
manifold gasket leaking	[ 2 complaints ]	? more info
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