



OCT - 9 2009

U.S. Department
of TransportationNational 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-AUG-2009

Repository ☐Reference No.
10281885**OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)**

Name

Address

City

PALTO

State

CA

Zip Code

Daytime Telephone Number

E-mail Address

Evening Telephone Number

The information you provide will be used to identify potential safety-related defects. We may share your information with the applicable vehicle manufacturer during an investigation or recall in accordance with the routine uses described in the agency's Privacy Act notice. See 49 FR 53971 (Sep. 3, 2004).

VEHICLE INFORMATION

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

Make

TOYOTA

Model:

TUNDRA

PRUIS

Model Year

2010

Date Purchased

Dealer's Name and Telephone Number

Engine:

No: Cylinders

Fuel Type:

Original Owner

☐

Dealer's City

State

Zip Code

Transmission Type

☐ Antilock Brakes

Powertrain

Multiple Failure:

Incident Date(s)

23-JUL-2009

☐ Cruise Control**FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION**

Vehicle Component Codes: 110000 ELECTRICAL SYSTEM, 117000 DIGITAL INSTRUMENT PANEL

Failure Mileage

Failure Speed

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: DOTM19ABC036)

☐ Original Equipment
☐ Prior Repair

Failure Location:

Tire Component Code

Tire Failure Type:

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A CHILD SEAT FAILURE

Make:

Date Manufactured:

Model No./Name:

Seat Type:

Installation System:

Child Seat Component Code:

Failed Part:

APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION

(Please describe in detail the incident(s), failure(s), crash(es), and injury(ies).)

Crash

☐ Yes ☒ No

Fire

☐ Yes ☒ No

Number of Persons Injured

Number of Deaths

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 TEST DROVE A 2010 TOYOTA PRUIS FROM A AUTHORIZED DEALER. HE STATES THAT HE WAS WEARING POLARIZED SUNGLASSES. HE HAD EXTREME DIFFICULTY READING THE INSTRUMENT PANEL CLUSTER AND SPEED ODOMETER GAUGE WHICH EXHIBITED DIM LIGHTING. THE VIN WAS UNAVAILABLE. BL

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.

[REDACTED]
Palo Alto, CA [REDACTED]

30 September 2009

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

To Whom It May Concern:

I have chosen to use this letter instead of the form in which it is enclosed because the form will not work to let me communicate a safety-related product defect I believe needs to be addressed or at least reported to and acknowledged by the manufacturer, Toyota, as a problem they plan to address soon.

First, the form is inadequate because it refers to a 2010 Toyota Tundra and that is not the vehicle I wish to report. I believe I understand why this is the case. The person who printed it encountered the same error on your website that I encountered. There is no entry for the Toyota Prius for any model year, even though it has been in production since 1997 and sold in the USA since 2001. Please address this website oversight.

Here is the product defect I wish for you to address. The 2010 Prius has a dashboard display just below the windshield that reports the speed, fuel level, and other important operating information. That display is a reflected image of a vacuum-fluorescent display inside the dash. Unfortunately, the reflection path polarizes the displayed image so that it is all but unreadable through polarized sunglasses. Any NHTSA engineer can confirm this by holding a pair of clip-on sunglasses between his eyes and the display and rotating the lenses. When they pass through the normal wearing angle, the display goes black. Clever engineering should not trump safety and utility, no matter how elegant it seems to be.

I am writing this because I own a 2004 Prius. In this vehicle, the speedometer display is polarized at 45° to the wearing angle of polarized lenses. It suggests that the vacuum-fluorescent display image in the 2004 – 2009 Prius is reflected differently than in this model, resulting in only a partial dimming of the display to a wearer of polarized sunglasses. I wrote to Toyota and asked them to forward my complaint to their engineers. Either they ignored me or their engineers did. In either case, the 2010 version of this reflected display is a step in the wrong direction. It is my hope that a communication from the NHTSA that this problem needs to be addressed might get more serious attention than a mere consumer complaint.

If members of your staff own and drive the 2004 – 2009 and also the 2010 Prius, it should be a simple process for a staff engineer to confirm my observations. Once again, the test is simple. Just rotate a pair of cheap clip-on polarized sunglasses in front of the Prius display and observe the results.

Thank you for your attention,

Sincerely yours,

[REDACTED]

Enclosed in an unusable NHTSA form for the reasons explained above.