

Would you please forward this
to your agency responsible for
Vehicle recalls. I called 202-366
4000
and they said unless it was addressed
to a person, it would be returned
again - then hung up on me - [REDACTED]

~~UNABLE TO LOCATE
INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION
NO LONGER AT DOT HEADQUARTERS~~

EF

~~NATSA #
1200 N.J. Ave SE
West Building
Washington DC~~ [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

July 22, 2011

NVS-200

AUG 12 2011

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[REDACTED]
Fairhope, Al [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

NATSA

1200 N.J. Av SE

West Building

Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Safety Recall 50901C of 2003 and 50902-1 of Sep 2009 issued by Workhorse Custom Chassis for severe brake problems (like my 2002 Southwind motorhome) for vehicles built between July 24, 2000 and December 19, 2007. Replacement parts were not made available until November 2010 even though the critical problem was known by them and all the Workhorse repair facilities as early as 2003 or earlier.

Attached is a letter I wrote to Workhorse requesting reconsideration of nearly a thousand dollars of unexpected brake repairs I was charged for when I picked it up after leaving it at Prattville Auto and RV in Prattville, Alabama for repairs under Safety Recall 50902-1. Also attached is their reply denying my request stating replacement of damaged rotors and related labor was not related to caliper failure. Workhorse has ignored two subsequent requests for reconsideration.

As stated in my letter to Workhorse requesting reimbursement, my motorhome has a long history of serious brake failures and overheating brakes and there is no doubt that these abnormal conditions and failures caused by sticking defective calipers contributed to the premature need to totally replace all the rotors with only 45,000 miles on it. I have owned 5 motorhomes, some with twice the mileage as this one, and NEVER had to replace rotors. Prattville Auto stated the rotors were damaged so badly that legal tolerances would not permit a repair by "turning". Despite this, Workhorse established their own criteria for collateral damage for reimbursement under the recall for which I apparently have no recourse without taking legal action unless you can help me. See attached pictures of how bad Workhorse says the rotors would have to be damaged in order to qualify for collateral damage covered under the recall.

You must have guidelines or criteria for determining what comprises collateral damage from a defective part rather than leaving it up to the sole discretion of the maker of the defective part or vehicle. I would appreciate any information you can give me in this regard to substantiate my claim to Workhorse for reimbursement. It was bad enough that we could not safely use our vehicle for 9 years pending manufacture of replacement calipers, but then we were not fully reimbursed for the cost of repairs necessitated by their defective calipers.

I understand Toyota was heavily fined by the Federal Government for failing to report a known defect in the accelerator pedal for a few days. Workhorse knew of this serious defect for at least 3 years that nearly cost us our lives before any notification and then took about 7 years to correct the problem. Were they ever fined or any other action taken?

Any help in this regard will be greatly appreciated.

[REDACTED]

cc: Workhorse Customer Service, Recall Dept. 850 Stephenson Hwy; Troy, MI 48083

I have also enclosed a letter to Sec of Transportation dated Apr 14, 2010 which was never answered.

March 8, 2011

[REDACTED]
Fairhope, Al [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Workhorse Customer Service, Recall Dept.

850 Stephenson Highway

Troy, MI 48083

Re: my 2002 Southwind 32 on a W-20 Workhorse Chassis VIN 5B4MP67GX13 [REDACTED] safety recall 50901C of 2003 and 50902-1 of Sep 2009 regarding serious brake failures from defective calipers.

After many many brake failures, 3 life threatening requiring towing up to 200 miles, dating back to 2003, and almost 10 years of brake failures, you finally replaced all calipers, rotors, seals and pads on December 1, 2010 at Prattville Auto and RV repair as per attached invoice. For the first time since I purchased this vehicle new, we made our first extended trip without overheating or failed brakes. See attached list of brake failures requiring service and repairs. We can supply documentation and invoices of the many problems and failures related to this brake problem

However, when we picked up the Motorhome after the recall repairs, we did NOT expect a charge for the necessary repairs. We were appalled at having to pay nearly a thousand dollars for replacement of rotors, pads, oil seals, etc. We have had 5 class A motorhomes and have never had to replace rotors even with mileage in excess of 100,000 miles. With less than 40,000 miles on this vehicle we probably would not have even had to replace the brake pads under normal use with properly operating calipers. We contend the need for all these parts and labor are related to the repeated over heating of the brakes due to sticking calipers and related complete brake failures at which times few if any of these parts were replaced. Many times you merely released the calipers by lubricating the caliper pens and sent us on our way because the damaged parts did not justify replacement pending final recall repairs. It would be difficult to count the many times we stopped every hundred miles or so to check our brakes and had to wait to let them cool on one or more wheels.

We have had several recalls on our other vehicles, including Toyota Camry, and have NEVER been charged a penny for the necessary repairs.

We strongly feel the \$960.38 charge for parts and repairs we paid are directly related to the defective calipers which caused repeated overheating and in 3 cases complete brake failure and should be reimbursed. We have had to absorb much other expense related to brake failures including hotel costs at repair locations while on vacation, many extra miles to obtain authorized service, vacation cancellations and interruptions, etc.

If you do not feel the requested reimbursement should be made, we request you state the specific reasons why we are liable for these expenses.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

April 14, 2010

[REDACTED]
Fairhope, Al [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Mr Ray Lahood

Secretary of Transportation

1200 N.J. Av S.E.

Washington DC, 20590

I want to commend you on the response you have given to the problems Toyota Owners have been having with their cars, including fines for failing to report defects to your agency even for a few days. I only wish the same attention could be given to protect owners of Recreation Vehicles on Workhorse Chassis' produced long ago as July 2000 that are having very serious brake problems. Workhorse tells me there are at least 49,000 vehicles affected. They have repeatedly postponed promised dates for corrective parts (defective Bosch Calipers) and recently they advised they are just now "tooling up" for the parts and gave no estimated date for availability.

My first near fatal brake failure on our new 2002 Motorhome occurred July 11, 2003 when we lost braking when descending a narrow twisting mountain road in north Georgia. Only through skillful driving, hand brake, downshifting, help with other cars giving us room and just plain luck were we able to bring the 10 ton vehicle to a stop. The front right wheel was smoking and nearly caught on fire. After spending overnight on the road, Workhorse towed us 200 miles to Columbia, SC, their nearest Workhorse facility. Love Chevrolet had to replace all burned out parts in that wheel including calipers, ABA sensors, pin kit, rotor, oil seals, pads, etc. They were aware of the design problem in the brakes related to a type of plastic (instead of steel) component in the caliper pistons that expanded with heat preventing the brake from releasing from the braking position. They said Workhorse was aware of the problem.

In January, 2004, we again lost all brakes on I-26 south of Asheville, N.C., narrowly avoiding a rear end collision with an 18 wheeler by swerving into the emergency lane. Again, we were towed to Fletcher Chevrolet, Fletcher, N.C. where they determined both rear calipers had stuck causing overheating of the brake fluid to a gel. At least 3 times since, we have had brakes overheating due to stuck calipers requiring removal of the wheels and lubricating the caliper pins.

It was not until July 2005, two years after our first near fatal accident due to brake failure, that Workhorse sent us a copy of dealer bulletin 50401-C describing a "defect involving brake caliper hanging in a partial apply position that can get extremely hot causing severe damage to brake parts". This notice was replaced by Interim Notice Safety Recall 50901-C in May 2009. Even to today, replacement calipers are the same parts that nearly cost us our lives or serious injury at least 3 times.

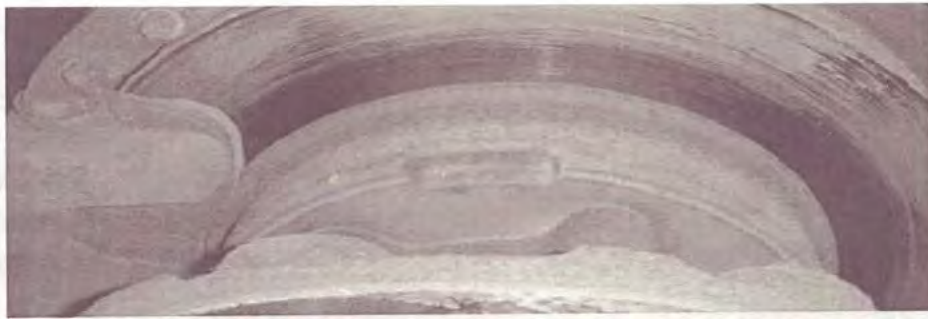
Despite the history of brake problems with our Motorhome and provisions in the recall notices for repair costs related to the defective calipers, Workhorse has twice denied reimbursement our requests for such costs. More importantly, we have had to operate our vehicle with defective brake calipers since it was purchased in October 2001, nearly 9 years. We cannot sell our motorhome at a fair market price and we are reluctant to use it for fear of further brake failures. When we do, we must stop frequently to inspect for hot brakes.

I have full documentation including work orders and letters to and from Workhorse, I would be glad to provide.

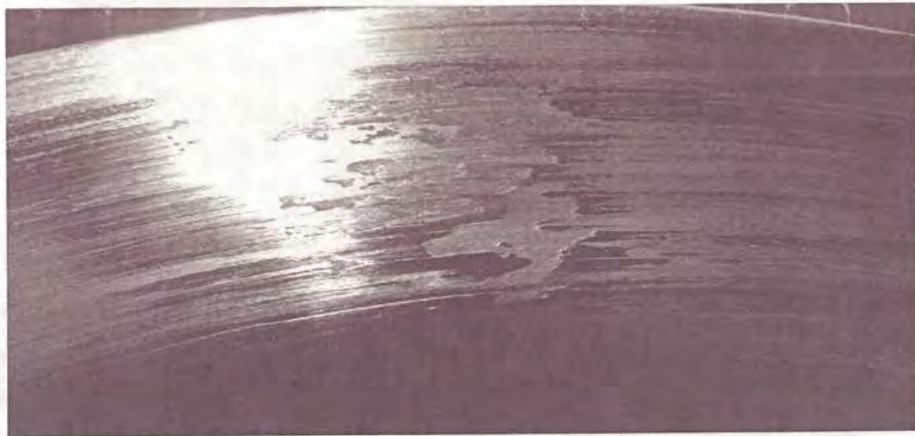
My question is, what is or has been done to provide penalties or fines to Workhorse that might motivate them to correct these serious defects in a more timely manner? Also, is there any assistance you can provide to give us some kind of relief in this serious matter?

Thank you for any consideration you may provide in this critical matter.

[REDACTED]



The rotor shown below exhibits severe brake pad material transfer and is a good indicator that the brake caliper assembly at this wheel end had experienced brake drag that may be related to the safety defect. The excessive amount of brake pad material transferred on to the rotor would be considered collateral damage and will require the replacement of the rotor. The associated cost is covered by the interim repair procedure if a caliper failure has occurred.



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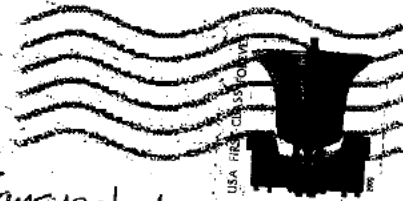


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Fairhope, AL

MOBILE AL 365

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Ray La Hood Secretary of Transportation

U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of Defect Investigation NUS-210

1200 New Jersey Av. SE

Washington DC 20590

