

CU-10346649-5705

August 2, 2010

C O P Y

AUG 10 2010

Lexus Assistance  
P.O. Box 2991-Mail Drop L201  
Torrance, CA 90509-2991

RE: ODI # 10346649

CASE # 282678

Attention Complaint Desk:

Since I wrote the enclosed letter the only response I have received from Lexus was a phone call from customer service advising me the Lexus technical rep considered my car "normal" and performed as "designed." My 6/15/10 letter has already expressed my sentiments about that conclusion. It may perform as designed but it certainly is not normal by any standards other than Lexus. While I am comfortable with the "sport suspension" of the GS, the steering problem is a totally different issue. It was ridiculous of the Lexus factory rep, either through ignorance or deception, to insinuate a close relationship between the two when actually they are almost mutually exclusive.

I understand Lexus is recalling several thousand LS models for a steering control computer replacement with one newly designed. And this after only ONE complaint in the U.S. While I realize the problem with the GS is not the same, I want to know why Lexus is not performing the same service considering they have had complaints on the GS steering since 2007 as indicated in my 6/15/10 letter. I realize when factory techs visit dealer service departments they are there for specific problems. Unless customers complain bitterly as I will continue to do, Lexus may have not have the proper input from dealer service departments about the wandering and skittish nature of the GS and also the ES models. Dealers know they can do nothing to cure or resolve the complaint and from my conversations with several service personnel at various dealers they say nothing about it since they know the problem is in the electric power steering ratio design.

It is obvious the Lexus steering system is not properly designed since it tends to over assist and at higher speeds does not adjust by adequately increasing the steering ratio to compensate for the higher speed. This causes the car to wander on certain road surfaces requiring constant corrections to keep it in a straight line. The car simply does not track, feels skittish and certainly is not "planted" as one would expect from a car with a competent suspension and proper steering action. I am enclosing a 7/10 Car & Driver magazine article in which they complained of the same thing in a test of a 2010 ES model.

This steering problem can be dangerous. On some roads, if the driver takes his eye off the road for just an instant (a sneeze can be a dangerous thing to occur if you are driving

C O P Y

this car at highway speed) the car can be two feet into another lane or off the shoulder. As a driver, one cannot rely on the car to continue on the same path for even a few seconds. If windy, this car can be an absolute handful regardless of the type or condition of the road.

There is no doubt Lexus has known about this for several years. I am enclosing a copy of a complaint from 2/10 in the Car Space Automotive Forum. Considering Toyota/Lexus history re runaway acceleration (I have yet to meet any dealer or owner who really believes floor mats were the cause, but dealers grit their teeth and continue to warn everyone per the company line), defective valve springs, etc. and their failure to adequately address these issues for years I am not one to sit still and accept this steering problem as a "normal" trait of this car. It is not "normal", and definitely not acceptable.

Since I do not think Lexus is taking me seriously I am sending copies of all my correspondence to the NHTSA as a formal complaint.



June 15, 2010

.. C O P Y

Toyota Motors  
Attn.: Al Smith, V.P., Lexus Customer Service  
Headquarters 11  
19001 Southwester Ave.  
Torrance, CA 90501

Dear Sir:

On November 16, 2009 I purchased a 2010 Lexus GS350 from Lexus of Melbourne. In February, 2010 I responded to a customer satisfaction survey from Lexus in which I stated this was the worst driving car I had ever owned at highway speeds. I never received further communication from Lexus and still wonder why Lexus bothers with owner satisfaction surveys since they don't seem to care to follow up

In April, 2010, I formally complained to Lexus. My complaint was about the severe tendency of this car to wander at highway speeds requiring constant corrections by the driver to keep the car traveling in a straight line.

On May 17, 2010 I met with a factory technician named Dary at Lexus of Melbourne (this is a 140 mile round trip for me) to discuss the problem. Dary let me know in no uncertain terms he was "the expert" on GS models and assured me if anything was wrong with the car he would know it as he drove three different GS cars himself. He was very specific and emphatic in informing me this car had a "sport suspension" and handled differently from the cars I had been driving. Dary talked to me as though I was some old, ignorant man who did not know anything about cars. I have owned, in the past ten years, a Porsche, two Nissan "Z" cars, a BMW 330cic, and currently a 2004 Mercedes CLK500 cabrio. I am not new to "sport suspensions" and probably have as much or more driving experience as Dary in this area. I suspect practically all he drives are Lexus cars. There is a fine line between arrogance and condescension and I felt Dary, with all good intentions, tip-toed on that line.

I explained to Dary that my GS350 was very sensitive to many road surfaces, most for which I could not see any reason, and required the driver to constantly make back and forth steering corrections to keep the car aimed straight and this was particularly evident at speeds over 60mph. I also told him that this was very erratic and occurred at unpredictable times and on highway surfaces that just defied reasoning as to why it was occurring. I told him he needed to drive the car at length and offered to let him keep my car for an extended period so he could experience how erratic this occurred. Instead he checked the alignment, changed my tire pressures and added air although I had told him my tires had nitrogen (another example of him not listening to me; dealer had to evacuate and put all nitrogen back in tires) and he and the service manager, as an

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unnneeded passenger who could not really experience my complaint, drove the car 22 miles and declared it normal. Again, he reminded me he was "the expert" and it drove like all the other GS350s he had driven. I knew then I had wasted a day with him. I actually suspected this initially before he had even driven the car when I showed him copies from the Lexus Owners Club and Edmonds Lexus Car Space forums of owners with the same complaint going back to the 2007 model years. His comment was "I don't have time to read these sites and if I did I would not get anything done." Again, tip-toeing on that fine line.

The point here is he did not listen to me. I told him repeatedly the steering was erratic depending on road surface and a 22 mile drive was a waste of time and totally inconclusive. If I had known he was going to Orlando next I would have asked him to take my car. But I think he knew all along what the problem was. He was correct in stating my car drove like all the others because he only drives Lexus cars and he is not very knowledgeable about "sport suspension" cars and the precise and exacting steering ratios and steering effort required for those type of suspensions. Steering effort should be reduced at higher speeds and I am convinced the GS is not properly regulated in this area.

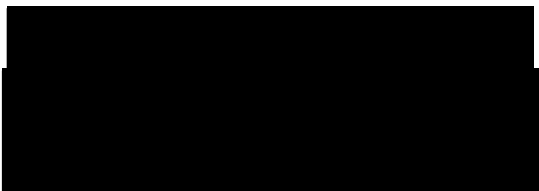
I will add that on my 70 mile drive back home the car seemed to ride differently and not like before. I am not talking about steering, but the ride. The next morning I gauged my tire pressures and found he had put 36psi in all the tires. I do not run those pressures; factory specs are 33psi front and rear.

Since that May 17<sup>th</sup> meeting I have done a lot of research on my own and found by talking to several Lexus service personnel at other dealerships (I have no names as they refused to provide but were willing to talk anonymously) they also have had complaints about the steering on not only the GS but also on the ES. I found complaints about the ES on the same web sites referenced before. All are complaining about the tendency of the car to wander at highway speeds.

The conclusion I have come to is the electric power steering has a terrible tendency to over assist such that under certain road conditions the driver finds himself constantly correcting by moving the steering wheel maybe one half inch to the right and then one half inch to the left and back and forth in an effort to keep the car in a straight line until the road surface changes and then suddenly all is normal. This is not tramlining (Dary did not seem to know what tramlining was). It is distracting and aggravating. It's a shame Lexus did not make their electric steering adjustable like the Nissan Maxima's so-called "sport sedan."

I have no complaints about Lexus of Melbourne. They did change the tire brand in an attempt to cure my problem but it had no effect and I really did not expect a cure from changing the tires. I paid for the nitrogen substitute in the tires but also felt it would not provide relief.

I want Lexus to advise me of a correction or cure for what I consider an over assist problem that exists at highway speeds. Please don't give me the Toyota "head in the sand" approach and deny it exists. Too many service personnel and owner's forums say otherwise.



Port Orange, FL

COPY



Reply

couple days ago with the same RFT.  
Got 40k miles out of them.

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C O P Y

#77 of 83

Re: 2008 GS460 Drifting on un-even road [REDACTED]

Mar 04, 2010 (7:47 pm)

Reply

Replying to [REDACTED] (Feb 09, 2010 1:01 pm)

I have a 2008 GS350 with steering issues. I think it is a combination of issues that occur. First the steering is electronic and very sensitive. Second, the tires are wide and low profile. Third, when the road has uneven surface, patterns or wheel ruts (like the wagon wheel days), the GS350 can take off on its own if you are not driving the car, it will drive you. On a smooth road surface or corner, the car performs extremely well but introduce these other issues and problems can occur.

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**DURING OUR 2000-MILE  
'GOLFING ODYSSEY,  
EXACTLY NO ONE SAID  
OF THE GENESIS 3.8, "HEY,  
I REALLY MISS THOSE  
EXTRA 85 HORSES."**

us's famous fit and finish, and you've got your Masters champ, right? Well, hold onto your putter for a sec.

On Lexus's list of ES350 priorities, ride was evidently at the top and handling was somewhere in the subbasement, maybe just above glove-box hinges and cargo-net clips. On interstates, it's sure swell to float atop a perpetual cloud of gauze, but the chassis is so underdamped and body motions are so pronounced that the ES350 was ever prone to wander, requiring a few too many corrections from its overassisted steering.

Nevertheless, after a 200-mile drive, you'll still be ready for 9, even 18, holes at Magnolia Grove. Throttle tip-in is perfect, sightlines are unobstructed (aided by thin A-pillars and a low beltline), and there's an uncanny rightness about the interface among pedals, steering wheel, shifter, and center stack. Around town, especially, the ES350 felt light, airy, and more agile than its competitors. By the way, its gear lever slips silkily into neutral at any time, if you know what we're saying.

Plus, there's inevitably gonna come that moment when your neighbor says, "I hear you bought a new car. Whadja get?" And you get the snooty pleasure of announcing, "I bought a Lexus, sucker."

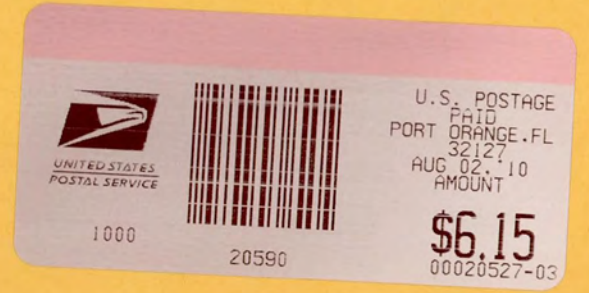
### 1. HYUNDAI GENESIS 3.8

Only one car in our group, the Genesis, is rear-wheel drive, and only one car, the Genesis, rides atop a platform conceived specifically for it—that is, for a luxury sedan rather than for a whole clan of variously badged family sedans. The Genesis comes closest by far to attaining a 50/50 weight distribution, and while that doesn't guarantee great handling, it has nonetheless helped imbue this chassis with a measure of athleticism absent in its competitors.

By the time we reached the Hampton Cove course just outside of Huntsville, it was clear that the Genesis offered the greatest lateral grip and that, under virtually all dynamic conditions, it felt more responsive and confidently planted. What's more, it delivered the best brake feel and stopped from 70 mph in the fewest feet.

Hyundai's 290-hp V-6 is certainly quiet, especially at wide-open whack, but there's an underlying grittiness that doesn't emanate from, say, the Lexus's V-6. Nonetheless, in this group, the Hyundai engine delivers the most power and torque, all of it funneled through the numerically highest final-drive ratio. The predictable result: quickest to 60 mph, quickest through the quarter-mile, and tied with the Lexus in a rolling start to 60.

In our long-term fleet, we currently possess a 2009 Genesis 4.6, whose 375-hp V-8 has clocked more than 40,000 miles. We love all that oomph, of course, but those of us who went on this trip are now



**RETURN RECEIPT  
REQUESTED**

*W48-226*

**To:** OFFICE / DEFECTS INVESTIGATIONS / CRD  
NVS-216  
1200 NEW JERSEY SE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. **Zip:** 20590



*(CASE # 282678) (OOL 10346449)*

