

CL-10354292-5165

**INFORMATION Redacted PURSUANT TO THE FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(B)(6)**

5

AUG 26 2010

August 20, 2010

Audi of America
Client Relations
3499 West Hamlin Road
Rochester Hills, MI, 48309

Re: VIN WAULT64B73N [REDACTED]

Audi Client Relations,

I'm writing in reference to what must be a very familiar issue to you by now. My 2003 Audi A6 developed problems with its gauge cluster and the problems have grown progressively worse, causing a serious safety issue with operation of the vehicle. I have copied the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration on this letter because of the high rate of failure and safety issues associated with the gauge cluster problem on 1999-2005 Audi vehicles.

Audi AG and Audi of America have been aware of gauge cluster failure problems for several years, and the same part (gauge cluster printed circuit board) has been problematic on A4, A6 and other Audi cars built between 1999 and 2005. Audi has reportedly refused to extend warranty consideration to owners affected by the dangerous and endemic failure of this poorly designed and manufactured part. Audi UK chose to replace all identically failed clusters free of charge in the United Kingdom.

I'm writing to ask Audi of America to cover the cost of a replacement gauge cluster for my 2003 Audi A6. My warning gauges no longer function and the multifunction liquid crystal display does not indicate readable information. As such, there is no way to know the level of seriousness of the warnings, which occurs in conjunction with the display showing the information. My display has not functioned correctly since the expiration of the warranty. I have inquired at the local Audi dealer about replacement or repair, only to find out that it came with a \$700 plus install service bill. I have avoided this expense since I was unaware of the importance of the display in issuing warnings of failing parts in the vehicle.

The significance of the failing display was not of major concern until I realized just how important and vital this display is relating to the safety of daily driving. After a loud beep followed by a constant flashing of a blurry display, which could not be read, I had to pull over under very unsafe conditions and do a complete check of my vehicle to try and diagnose the reason for the unknown warning. As it turns out, the flashing blur of a display was actually supposed to read "STOP" due to a low coolant level. I had to have my car towed to the nearest safe area so as to avoid any accidents. Due to the fact that the instrument cluster display was not functioning properly, this occurrence could have been readily avoided if it actually functioned, as it should. Luckily, there were no accidents and no damage to my cars' engine. As you can see, the information display is a very important part of the car, which directly affects the operation of the vehicle, but more importantly, the safety of daily driving. It was the intent of Audi for this part to serve that purpose so there is a great amount of credibility to my request.

After considerable effort researching this issue, I've found that Audi in the United Kingdom (Audi UK) has offered no-cost replacement to owners affected by gauge cluster failures, due to the dangerous nature of a failed gauge cluster. I'm asking for the same consideration here in the United States, and due to the hazards presented by this defect and Audi's refusal to issue a voluntary recall.

The part in question has failed on a sizable percentage of 1999-2005 Audi vehicles, according to Audi's own service centers, and may fail on any pre-2005 car at any time, regardless of warranty status.

Audi reportedly resolved the design and manufacturing problems that cause these gauge cluster failures after the 2003 model year and placed upgraded service parts into the dealer channel, according to my local Audi dealer and service provider. Despite these remedial steps, Audi has offered no special consideration to owners affected by the problem outside of the vehicle's normal warranty and expects owners to pay over

NM
090310
TGW

\$700.00, plus the cost of installation to replace a part that was poorly designed and has a very high failure rate.

Because the defect causes a dangerous operating condition, including lack of dependable indications of fuel, temperature, engine speed or vehicle speed, the vehicle is unsafe as designed.

I will accept nothing less than full warranty coverage at my local dealership (Your authorized local dealer) of a cluster replacement to restore safe operability of my vehicle.

As the prevalence of the Internet as a research tool for consumers grows, this problem and requests for consideration and refunds will only increase. My reasonable request should be honored; Audi clearly knows about this abnormally high failure rate, and has taken appropriate action in other countries to rectify the problem. Audi and its dealers are aware of the dangerous nature of this failure, and the exact reasons for the problem, which have been corrected in subsequent revisions of the cluster part.

There should be no other response to this request but agreement to replace the cluster at no charge. Additionally, Audi should consider a recall of the affected parts to ensure consumer and motorist safety.

Sincerely yours,

[Redacted signature block]

E-mail: [Redacted]

Address: [Redacted]

Miami, FL [Redacted]

cc:
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Vehicle Safety Division
400 7th Street, SW Rm. 5232
Washington, D.C. 20590

[REDACTED]
Miami, FL
USA

MIAMI FL 331

20 AUG 2010 PM 11



National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Vehicle Safety Division
400 7th Street, SW Rm. 5232
Washington, D.C 20590

