



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  
**MAY 23 2011**  
18-APR-2011

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

Name [REDACTED]  
Address [REDACTED]  
City PORT ANGELES State WA Zip Code [REDACTED]

Daytime Telephone Number [REDACTED] E-mail Address [REDACTED]  
Evening Telephone Number [REDACTED]

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: JTDKB20U757 [REDACTED]  
Make TOYOTA Model PRIUS Model Year 2005  
Date Purchased [REDACTED] Dealer's Name and Telephone Number [REDACTED] Engine: No: Cylinders [REDACTED] Fuel Type: [REDACTED]  
Original Owner  Dealer's City [REDACTED] State [REDACTED] Zip Code [REDACTED]  
Transmission Type [REDACTED]  Antilock Brakes  Cruise Control Powertrain [REDACTED] Multiple Failure: [REDACTED] Incident Date(s) 08-NOV-2005

**FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION**

Vehicle Component Code: 110000 ELECTRICAL SYSTEM Failure Mileage 14 Failure Speed [REDACTED]

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE**

Tire Make [REDACTED] Tire Model (Name or Number) [REDACTED] Tire Size (Example P215/65R15) [REDACTED]  
DOT No. (Example: DOTMAL9ABC036)  Original Equipment  Prior Repair Failure Location: [REDACTED]  
Tire Component Code [REDACTED] Tire Failure Type: [REDACTED]

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A CHILD SEAT FAILURE**

Make: [REDACTED] Date Manufactured: [REDACTED] Model No./Name: [REDACTED]  
Seat Type: [REDACTED] Installation System: [REDACTED]  
Child Seat Component Code: [REDACTED] Failed Part: [REDACTED]

**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 [REDACTED] Number of Deaths [REDACTED] 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 2005 TOYOTA PRIUS. THE CONTACT STATED THAT WHENEVER THE RADIO WAS IN ACTIVATION, IT WOULD NOT TRANSMIT A CLEAR RECEPTION. THE RADIO DEFECT OCCURRED ON THE PURCHASE DATE OF THE VEHICLE AND CONTINUED OVER THE YEARS. THE VEHICLE WAS TAKEN TO AN AUTHORIZED DEALER AND THEY WERE UNABLE TO PROVIDE A REMEDY FOR THE FAILURE. THE FAILURE MILEAGE WAS APPROXIMATELY 14.

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 to 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.

November 1, 2010

Jim Lentz, CEO  
Toyota Motor Sales USA  
19001 South Western Avenue  
Millstop WC 11  
Torrance, CA 90501

Dear Chairman Lentz:

I wrote to you in May of this year to complain about the radio reception in my 2005 Prius (a reprint of that letter is provided below).

Evidently, I am not alone.

Here is one of thousands of complaints I found on the internet about the problems with your radio system:

**Prius Owners with AM radio problems:**

*Your perceptions are correct. Toyota has an AM radio reception problem. It is a manufacturer defect, not your ears. I travel all over California for my job. I have been doing so for 20 years. I have owned Fords, Chevys, Cadillac's - you name it. I have never had an AM reception problem. And when I bought my 2005 Prius the AM reception was "great". I repeat, in the beginning "It was great". I work in the Bay Area and I could pull in Fresno KMJ 580 (a powerful station) and Sacramento 1530 with no problem. A little static, but not much. I could get 560 in SF with no problem.*

*That lasted about 1 1/2 years. Then the reception became almost all static. It was very obvious to me - I can tell the difference.*

*So what was the problem? I have taken the car into two different dealers and both said there was no problem. Either they were tone deaf, or Toyota knows they have a problem and they do not know how to fix it, so they do not want to admit it. I even had one dealer cite the section from the Prius owner's manual regarding AM radio reception - Give me a break.*

*I have bought longer whip antennas hoping it would boost reception - and there has been a small improvement - but I can still tell the difference. When the motor (the electric motor) revs up, the static is noticeably louder. In between buildings in the bay area, the reception almost disappears. Again, this never happened with my other cars and it didn't happen when I first bought the vehicle.*

*But guess what happened tonight (7-31-07) on my way home from work at 6:12 PM PSDT? The static stopped and the reception is great. So what happened? Either Al Gore is ignorant of the sun's solar flare affect on the planet (which could be true) and those flares stopped at exactly 6:12 PM, or could there be another explanation?*

*I say they defect stopped.*

*So what is that defect?*

*My understanding is that the Prius AM reception moves between the window and the whip antenna, depending on which one has the best reception. I think there is a flaw in the internal switching mechanism in the Prius radios that malfunctions. It doesn't switch back, when it should. Either that, or there is a wiring flaw in the Prius, which could be because of the electrical nature of this machine.*

*If there is a Toyota executive reading this blog, please get your act together and fix this problem. Prius owners love your vehicles. But, you have a manufacturer defect that you should fix.*

*If there is a class action lawyer reading this blog, please start a suit - but only if Toyota doesn't fix this problem.*

*Prius owners have faith - this problem will get resolved. Toyota will either run with this very very quickly (and resolve the problem at minimal cost), or they will be sued by a class action attorney and pay many many millions of dollars in damages.*

*My only hope is that the employee at Toyota who has ignored this problem will get fired and have his pension revoked. This situation should never have happened. Toyota thinks too much of their customers to let this affect their brand.*



As you can see, this particular posting dates back to 2007.

Obviously, a car radio is an essential component for safety.

Toyota's unwillingness to address this problem (or even acknowledge it) for early purchasers, is concerning to say the least.

I have reached the point beyond patience and understanding.

Has Toyota simply chosen to ignore the complaints of owners who entrusted \$30,000 of their hard earned dollars to purchase a Prius?

How Toyota can sell a vehicle that has established problems with vital components is troublesome.

And then, to add to the insult, leave the owners without recourse, without a correction?

I have become so annoyed, I have taken to interviewing any Prius owner I see on the street. And I find I am not alone.

I feel I was played for a sucker.

The fact that Toyota has since changed the entire system in recent models certainly proves Toyota was aware they had a problem.

I would like to hear Toyota's official statement on this problem and why they are evidently unwilling to provide a solution.

I thank you in advance for your attention to my complaint.

Sincerely,

*Previous letter text:*

*May 24, 2010*

*Last summer I wrote to you regarding some problems I had with my 2005 Prius key and got prompt attention. Thank you.*

*I am writing you today with a design flaw that I may have mentioned in my original letter; but it has become so annoying that I am compelled to write again.*

*The reception on my radio is...well, in a word: lousy.*

*I rely on my car radio and I would say at least 80% of the time I encounter static. At times it is so pervasive, it makes listening impossible.*

*The static often decreases when I release my foot from the gas. However, this in no way eliminates the static.*

*Now I will say that I live in a mountainous area: Washington State's Olympic Peninsula, and this is definitely part of the problem.*

*However, my friends with other makes of automobile have no such problems to the extent that I have.*

*When I asked my local Toyota dealer about this, I was told that due to the hybrid/electric nature of the car, this is just something I have to live with.*

*But the problem is more than annoying. If there were some emergency which required radio contact, I would be out of luck.*

*I have searched the Internet and find this is a common complaint. But I see no effort by Toyota to address it.*

*What can be done about this?*

*Thank you for your prompt reply in advance.*

*Sincerely,*