



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

July 13, 2011

[REDACTED]
Mineola, NY [REDACTED]

NVS-216 mec
Ref. # 10404794

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your correspondence concerning your model year (MY) 2004 Mini Cooper vehicle. Your correspondence was received by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Office of Defects Investigation (ODI).

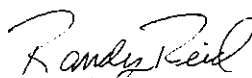
NHTSA is the Federal agency responsible for improving safety on our Nation's highways. We are authorized to order manufacturers to recall and repair vehicles or motor vehicle equipment when our investigations indicate that they contain safety defects in their design, construction, or performance. In order for the agency to initiate an investigation, we look carefully at the body of consumer complaints and other available data to determine whether a defect may exist. We cannot act on isolated problems or resolve disputes between individual owners, dealers, or manufacturers.

We appreciate the report you provided. Reports from motorists are a very important source of information for us. In your letter, you stated you had a great deal of trouble and expense with your MY 2004 MINI Cooper vehicle regarding the power steering. You want our agency to add your name and vehicle to the list of people who have complained about this issue

On September 24, 2010, NHTSA opened preliminary evaluation No. 10-038, into reports alleging loss of power steering assist in certain MY 2004 and MY 2005 Mini Cooper vehicles. On May 4, ODI upgraded that investigation to an engineering analysis No. 11-005, which is a more detailed and complete technical analysis of the character and scope of an alleged defect. This investigation is continuing and no determinations have been made at this time. For your information, we have enclosed a copy of the opening resume for engineering analysis No. 11--005 and a brochure explaining the investigation process that can also be found on our web site at www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/recalls/recallprocess.cfm.

Should you encounter a safety-related problem with a motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment in the future, we would appreciate it if you would complete an electronic Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire online at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/ivoq or call the Auto Safety Hotline at 1-888-327-4236. Also, a summary listing of vehicle owners' complaints, safety recalls, manufacturers' service bulletins, etc., can be obtained at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randy Reid".

Randy Reid, Chief
Correspondence Research Division
Office of Defects Investigation
Enforcement

Enclosures



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of Transportation

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ODI RESUME

OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

NHTSA
Authentic U.S. Government Information
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
uses a digital certificate to ensure
the content has remained unchanged

Investigation: EA 11-005
Prompted by: Consumer complaints, PE10-038
Date Opened: 05/04/2011
Investigator: Cynthia Glass
Approver: Frank Borris
Subject: Loss of Power Steering Assist
Reviewer: Scott Yon

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: BMW OF NORTH AMERICA, LLC
Products: 2004-2005 Mini Cooper
Population: 59,614

Problem Description: Loss of power steering assist due to power steering pump and/or power steering cooling fan failure.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	339	180	519
Crashes/Fires:	8	0	8
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	4,508	4,508

*Description of Other: Warranty claims related to power steering loss.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: This Engineering Analysis is opened.

Summary:

ODI has received 339 complaints alleging an unexpected loss of power steering assist while driving the vehicle. When the power steering assist stops working, drivers experienced difficulty in steering and/or controlling the vehicle.

According to BMW drivers may experience either a temporary or permanent loss of power steering assist. BMW further advised that a temporary loss of power steering assist may be due to a malfunctioning cooling fan or an under-voltage condition in the power steering system. A permanent loss of power steering assist may be due to an error in the internal electronics, and may also result in the continuous running of the power steering pump.

The VOQ complaints allege 5 minor crashes and 3 fires. The crashes are described as "hit the curb". The fires are described as "melted wires". There were no property damage claims.

ODI has received similar complaints for other model year Mini Cooper vehicles. Additional information is required to evaluate the frequency, consequence, and scope of this issue. Accordingly, the investigation has been upgraded to an Engineering Analysis.