

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

From: [Wells, Cynthia CTR \(NHTSA\)](#)
To: [Fogle, Brenda CTR \(NHTSA\)](#)
Subject: FW: Follow up to ODI Complaint: 10437229
Date: Monday, December 12, 2011 9:25:14 AM
Attachments: [10437229-3.jpg](#)
[10437229-4.docx](#)

EQ-10437229-6651

Report Vehicle Safety Defects!



www.safercar.gov

Subject: FW: Follow up to ODI Complaint: 10437229

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2011 4:07 PM
To: DataQuality, DataQuality (NHTSA)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Follow up to ODI Complaint: 10437229

Attached are two files for your review. I hope this helps and provides you with complete information about the serious and catastrophic safety failures I encountered. The #1 issue right now is whether or not you would like to see / evaluate / analyze my vehicle; I have not notified Toyota, or taken the vehicle to a Toyota dealership, in case you would like to see the vehicle first. Please let me know as soon as possible so that I'll know if I should continue to keep the vehicle or go ahead and contact Toyota. Thank you!

[REDACTED]
W LAFAYETTE IN [REDACTED]

C: [REDACTED]



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

25-NOV-2011

Repository ☐Reference No.
10437229

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name

Address

City

WEST LAFAYETTE

State

IN

Zip Code

Daytime Telephone Number

E-mail Address

Evening Telephone Number

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

JTDEKB20U953

Make

TOYOTA

Model

PRIUS

Model Year

2005

Date Purchased
NOV 15, 2004

Dealer's Name and Telephone Number

Kearny Mesa Toyota

Engine:
No. Cylinders

4

Fuel Type:

GAS

Original Owner

☒

Dealer's City

San Diego

State

CA

Zip Code

92111

Transmission Type

CVT

☒ Antilock Brakes

Powertrain

☒ Cruise Control

Multiple Failure:

CRUISE CONTROL
STEERING

Incident Date(s)

22-NOV-2011
23-NOV-2011

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Vehicle Component Codes: 180000 VEHICLE SPEED CONTROL, 010000 STEERING

Failure Mileage

27,773

Failure Speed

70

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Make

Tire Model (Name or Number)

Tire Size (Example P215/65R15)

DOT No. (Example: DOTM19ABC036)

☐ Original Equipment
☐ Prior Repair

Failure Location:

Tire Component Code

Tire Failure Type:

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A CHILD SEAT FAILURE

Make:

Date Manufactured:

Model No./Name:

Seat Type:

Installation System:

Child Seat Component Code:

Failed Part:

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

Number of Deaths

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 WHILE DRIVING APPROXIMATELY 70 MPH WITH THE CRUISE CONTROL ACTIVATED, HE APPLIED THE BRAKE PEDAL IN AN ATTEMPT TO DEACTIVATE THE CRUISE CONTROL. THE CRUISE CONTROL WOULD NOT DEACTIVATE AND THE CONTACT HAD TO MANUALLY DEACTIVATE THE CRUISE CONTROL SYSTEM. THE CONTACT ALSO STATED THAT HE HEARD A SNAPPING SOUND COMING FROM THE STEERING WHEEL WHILE ATTEMPTING TO PARK AT 5 MPH. THIS FAILURE OCCURRED THE DAY AFTER THE CRUISE CONTROL FAILURE. THE STEERING WHEEL THEN BECAME LOOSE AND THE CONTACT HAD DIFFICULTY STEERING THE VEHICLE. THE VEHICLE WAS NOT TAKEN TO THE DEALER FOR A DIAGNOSTIC TEST. THE VEHICLE WAS NOT REPAIRED. THE APPROXIMATE FAILURE MILEAGE WAS 24,000. THE VIN WAS NOT AVAILABLE.

Contact Update: Report states that I "had difficulty steering the vehicle" when, in fact, I was "completely unable to steer the vehicle."

The vehicle has not been taken to a dealer, nor yet repaired, as I was hoping that the DOT / NHTSA might want to see / analyze / evaluate this vehicle before Toyota gets to it. Please let me know ASAP if you would like to see the vehicle. Thank you!

There weren't any injuries / deaths only because the catastrophic failure of the steering wheel just happened

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.

ATTN: DOT / NHTSA

ODI Complaint: 10437229

Tue 11/22/11 & Wed 11/23/11

2005 Toyota Prius (Orig Owner, seven years, purchased in San Diego, CA)

27,773 Miles

VIN JTDEKB20U953 [REDACTED]

THE MOST IMMEDIATE ISSUE:

Would you (DOT/NHTSA) like to see / evaluate / analyze this vehicle before Toyota works on it? This is the primary reason I haven't called Toyota or taken it to a Toyota dealership. Please call me as soon as possible if you would. The catastrophic steering wheel incident happened two weeks ago and I can't wait in this situation much longer before taking steps to get it resolved. THANK YOU!

INITIAL REPORT CORRECTIONS:

The report states that I "had difficulty steering the vehicle" when, in fact, I "was completely unable to steer the vehicle." Had this happened in virtually any other scenario than being nearly parked it could easily have turned into a catastrophic event, not just for me, but for others as well, with potentially multiple serious injuries and deaths.

Also, after the catastrophic failure of the steering mechanism, the driver's air bag (SRS) and all the steering wheel mounted controls were disabled. Had this occurred in virtually another scenario than it did, I would have, most assuredly, needed the driver's air bag to prevent my own serious injury or death. In that scenario, I'm sure an inspection would have recognized that the driver's air bag didn't deploy but, perhaps, wouldn't have recognized that a severed steering wheel mechanism was the sole cause of the accident.

SUBMISSIONS TO CONSUMER REPORTS, CENTER FOR AUTO SAFETY (CAS)
AND PriusCHAT:

Catastrophic & Serious Safety Problems

Tue 11/22/11 & Wed 11/23/11

2005 Toyota Prius (Orig Owner, seven years, purchased in San Diego, CA)

27,773 Miles

VIN JTDKKB20U953 [REDACTED]

I have been a Prius devotee, and when I embarked on a long-distance trip, my 2005 Toyota Prius gave me confidence. Sadly, my confidence is gone after experiencing back-to-back serious, then catastrophic, safety failures that could have easily left me, and others, dead or seriously injured. Fortunately, I have merely been left stranded, far away from home in Jacksonville, FL, happy to be alive but not knowing what to do next. I'd like your advice. Here's what happened:

I was driving on the Interstate with the cruise control set at 70 mph. Seeing traffic stopped ahead, I applied the brakes for a moment to slow, then released the brake to coast. Much to my surprise, the cruise control was still engaged and the car accelerated. I applied the brakes again, manually turned off the cruise control, then was able to coast. I drove for another half-hour without incident until the following afternoon when I drove again, experiencing a much more serious problem.

I had just turned left, and was straightening the wheels (turning the steering wheel back right) when I heard, and felt, a loud "snap" in the steering wheel, immediately upon which I knew the steering wheel was disconnected and I could no longer steer the car. Very, very fortunately, and only because I was already nearly stopped, I was able to stop the vehicle without incident. However, I immediately recognized that, had this happened in almost any other scenario than being nearly parked, the outcome would have been markedly different. The steering wheel is completely loose, not controlling anything, and all the many steering wheel controls are equally disconnected, including the driver's air bag (SRS), something that I would have needed, but wouldn't have

worked, had I crashed into oncoming traffic or an Interstate median. Had I not decided to run a frivolous and unnecessary errand, I would have otherwise been on the Interstate, rushing home for Thanksgiving like many others, but now am merely stranded, in a motel, far from home in Jacksonville, FL, wondering what to do next.

My low mileage (just 27,773 mi), seven year old Prius is still parked, undriveable, exactly where I had the catastrophic failure. I called a tow truck, and Enterprise car rental, right afterwards, but neither showed ... it was Thanksgiving Eve. I ate cold, leftover pizza for Thanksgiving, but was otherwise happy to be alive and have a roof overhead and thinking that the two no-shows may have been blessings in disguise. Having had unsatisfactory resolution of some relatively minor problems when this car was new (cruise control wouldn't resume, poor radio reception, steering that seemed to take me out of my lane, and bad, Goodyear Integrity tires that I ended up replacing myself), and questionable, rip-off maintenance since, leaves me questioning whether or not I can trust Toyota to do right by me, particularly given how serious this situation is (and easily could have been, if not for me, for others) and what circumstance I now find myself in. I want to ensure this is handled correctly so that no one else will ever encounter what I have faced but with an easily, potentially much more catastrophic outcome.

Do I trust Toyota to do right by me and repair THEIR problem? Do I pay Toyota to repair THEIR problem, covering-up the inherent issue and leaving me with a car I no longer trust? Do I shell out the big bucks to buy a new vehicle, a financial burden I can't afford right now? Do I repair it, then trade it in on a new vehicle, or trade in an undrivable car, getting very little of the value it has to me? These, and many others, are questions I'm considering. Your help would be most appreciated!

Thank you!

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Service-connected / Disabled (unemployable) Veteran