

INFORMATION Redacted PURSUANT TO THE FREEDOM OF

INFORMATION ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(B)(6)



U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire
To Report Vehicle Safety Defects
1-888-DASH-2-DOT
(1-888-327-4236)
INTERNET: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline

DOT Auto Safety Hotline

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 100148

Date Received: 03-JAN-2012
FEB 13 2012
Repository:
Reference No.: 10442239

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name: [REDACTED]
Address: [REDACTED]
City: BELLEVUE 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: KNAGM4A70B [REDACTED]
Make: KIA Model: OPTIMA Model Year: 2011
Date Purchased: 9/24/11 Dealer's Name and Telephone Number: CHUCK OLSON CHEVROLET KIA - 206-546-4171 Engine: No: Cylinders: Fuel Type:
Original Owner: Dealer's City: SHORELINE State: WA Zip Code: 98133
Transmission Type: Antilock Brakes Powertrain: Multiple Failure: OCCURS MANY TIMES Incident Date(s): 19-DEC-2011 → MANY TIMES
 Cruise Control

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Vehicle Component Code: 120000 EXTERIOR LIGHTING Failure Mileage: 1300 Failure Speed: ALL SPEEDS

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: DOTM19ABC036): [REDACTED] 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: 0 Number of Deaths: 0 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 2011 KIA OPTIMA. WHILE ATTEMPTING TO MAKE A LEFT TURN, THE CONTACT INADVERTENTLY DEACTIVATED THE HEADLIGHTS WHEN THE TURN SIGNAL LEVER WAS PUSHED DOWN. THE CONTACT STATED THAT THE END POINT OF THE TURN SIGNAL LEVER INCLUDED A KNOB THAT CONTROLLED THE HEADLIGHTS, WHICH EASILY ROTATED TO DEACTIVATE THE HEADLIGHTS WHILE MAKING A TURN. THE VEHICLE WAS TAKEN TO THE DEALER FOR DIAGNOSTIC TESTING WHERE THE TECHNICIANS ADVISED THAT THERE WAS NOT A REMEDY AVAILABLE FOR THE ISSUE AND THE DESIGN OF THE VEHICLE COULD NOT BE COMPROMISED. THE VEHICLE WAS NOT REPAIRED. THE APPROXIMATE FAILURE MILEAGE WAS 1,300.

* ENCLOSED IS LETTER DATED DEC 20, 2011 FORWARDED TO KIA
* ALSO ENCLOSED IS DEALER REPORT INDICATING THEY CAN'T FIX THE PROBLEM.
* PERHAPS THE BEST TEMPORARY SOLUTION WOULD BE TO COMPULS KIA TO HAVE DEALERS REWIRE/PROGRAM THE HEADLIGHTS SO THEY ARE ALWAYS ON WHEN CAR IS IN USE.

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 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.

Narrative Description of Incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies)

- PERHAPS THE BEST TEMPORARY SOLUTION IS TO COMPEL KIA TO HAVE THEIR DEALERS REWIRE OR REPROGRAM THE HEADLIGHTS SO THAT THEY ARE ALWAYS ON WHEN THE CAR IS IN USE
- PLEASE COMPEL KIA TO WARN ALL OWNERS OF THEIR VARIOUS MODELS THAT MAY HAVE THE SAME PROBLEM
- ENCLOSED IS DEALER SERVICE REPORT INDICATING THEY CAN'T FIX PROBLEM
- ENCLOSED IS COPY OF MY LETTER TO KIA DATED DEC 20, 2011

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

U.S. Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, D.C. 20077-9382

Official Business Penalty for Private Use \$300



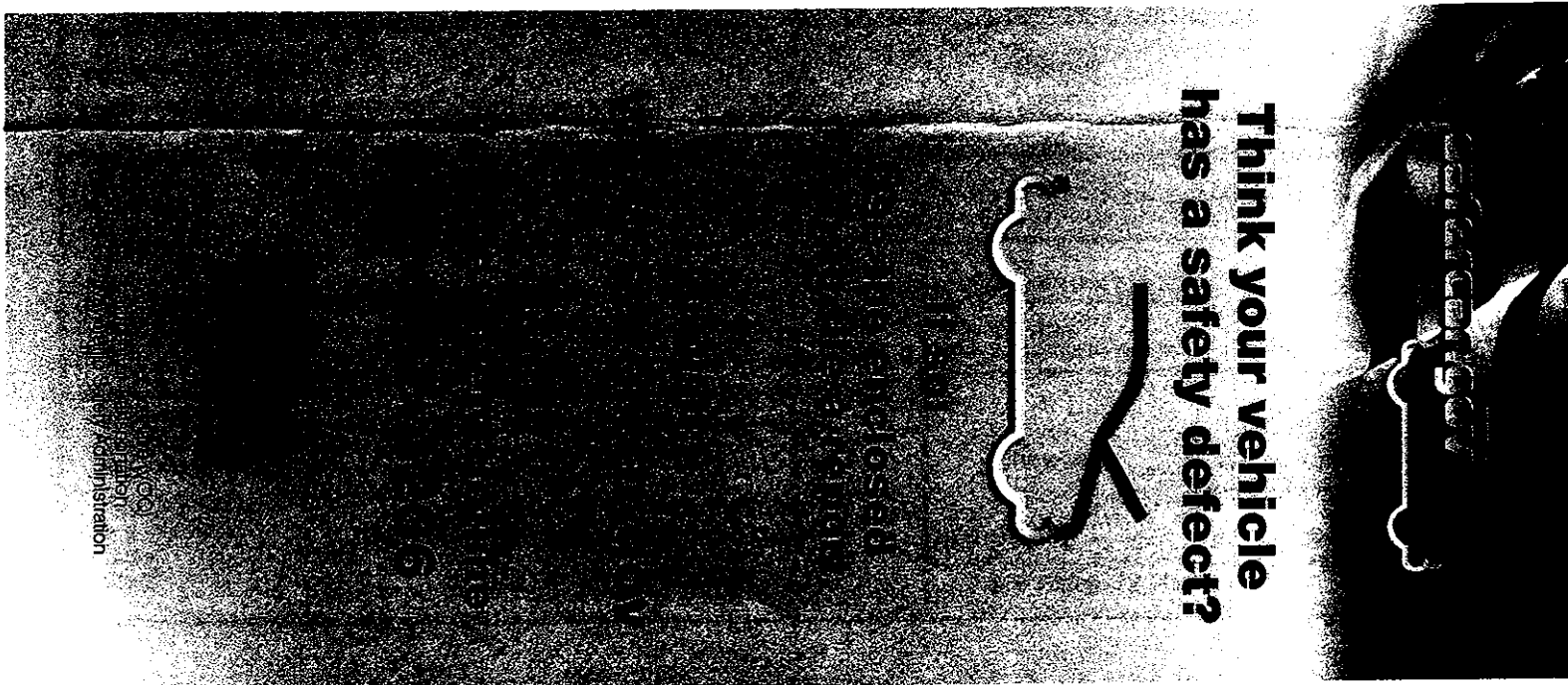
NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 1888 WASHINGTON, DC

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

**US Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Office of Defects Investigation, NVS-210
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE.
Washington, D.C. 20077-9382**



U.S. Department of Transportation

Enclosed

FEB 13 2012

February 6, 2012

FROM:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Bellevue, WA [REDACTED]

TO:

US Department Of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Office of Defects Investigation, NVS-210
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20077-9382

Hello,

As instructed by your letter, I affixed to this envelope the Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire.

Also enclosed are:

- my letter to Kia describing the problem
- the Dealership service report indicating that they cannot repair the problem.

Perhaps a simple temporary solution to the problem of the headlights being turned off while driving at night, would be to instruct Kia dealers to either re-wire or re-program the electrical system, so that the car's headlights are continuously on whenever the car is in use. In this manner, the headlights would not be able to be shut off during driving, which I suspect could easily result in fatalities.

In advance, thank you for your prompt work.

[REDACTED]

December 20, 2011

RE: SERIOUS SAFETY ISSUE - POSSIBLE DESIGN FLAW in Kia Optima 2011

Vin: KNAGM4A70B5 [REDACTED]

CASE# 2212642

Hello Adrian (agent id=26, ext 45447),

Per our phone conversation today, as you are aware, the end of the turn signal lever contains a light switch knob. This knob rotates to enable the setting of lights to either 1) Off Position, 2) Parking Lights, or 3) Headlights.

While driving my Optima at night, I used the above described knob to turn the headlights on. After driving many miles I entered a street that wasn't well illuminated by street lights; whereupon I noticed that the headlights were Not on, but only the Parking Lights were on. I found this very scary as I could not see ahead of me very well and also other cars on this dark street wouldn't be able to see me. I also could of easily been issued a traffic ticket for not having my headlights on while driving in the dark.

Since I did not intentionally turn the above knob from the Headlight position to the Parking Light position, I tried to figure out what happened. After close examination, I noted that the light switch knob is in very close proximity to the steering wheel. I then suspected that by moving the position of the turn signal lever (as one normally does many times during travel) by the end of the turn signal lever that contains the light knob, that the light knob easily changes position from Headlights to Parking Lights. To test this out, I tried this many times in a parking lot and indeed I found that when normally moving the turn signal level to initiate the turn signal operation, that the light control knob may easily move from the Headlight to the Parking Light position with VERY LITTLE pressure applied.

After finding this out, I now suspect that both myself as well as your other Kia Optima 2011 drivers probably have unknowingly turned off their headlights at night by the simple action of moving their turn signal lever. I suspect that if one were wearing gloves that this would compound the problem as the proximity of the drivers hand to the light control knob would be even closer and perhaps that the mere moving of the steering wheel (without intentionally moving the turn signal lever) would provide sufficiently close contact between the driver's glove and light control knob to enable the easily movable knob to change position and hence shut off the headlights.

Lastly, to compound the above problem. I noted that the green illuminated light towards the bottom of the tachometer is used to indicate when "lights" are turned on. It seems that this green light turns on with just the Parking Lights on, or with the Headlights on. As many cars have an indicator light that indicates when the Headlights are illuminated, a driver may see this green light and assume that it is indicating that their headlights are on, when, in fact, the Headlights are off, and just the Parking Lights are on. In other words, there is no positive feedback mechanism that confirms to the driver that their headlights are turned on. This coupled with the apparent design problem of the headlights being inadvertently turned off during nighttime travel, could lead to various dangerous situations.

It appears that in this vehicle when driving at night, drivers must continually visually check the position of the light control knob by leaving their interior cabin lights on, or by intermittently turning on their high beams to verify that the headlights are turned on, or by continually manually physically checking the position of the light control knob by constantly checking that the knob is fully rotated (to the Headlights-On position) whereupon the knob cannot be rotated any further.

I have driven this model for some time previously to purchasing my Optima 2011, and as I recall, the operation of the turn signal lever and control knob operated the same as in my vehicle; therefore, I don't believe that I simply have a uniquely defective mechanism. It appears that there may be a design flaw perhaps for all of these vehicles. You can simply test this out in a parking lot yourself and you will see that by moving the turn signal level by contact with the light control knob that the knob is easily rotated.

Having said all of the above, I must say that I have enjoyed riding in this vehicle and have recommended it to MANY people. I have also been very impressed with the care and attention that I have received from both Kia personnel and the dealership where I purchased the car. The many follow-up contacts from both Kia and the dealer to make sure that everything was fine with both the car as well as my interaction with Kia and the dealer is quite extraordinary (and welcomed!) and I have never experienced this before from any other manufacturer, both foreign and domestic. I frequently discuss your exceptional company philosophy with both friends and acquaintances. I sincerely hope that you accept this correspondence in the proper light and that you are able to solve this problem expeditiously.

I would greatly appreciate an immediate confirmation of receipt of this correspondence and a very prompt reply from you regarding this above serious issue.

Best regards,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the sender's name and signature.

CUSTOMER #: 68208

307485

**CHUCK OLSON
CHEVROLET KIA, INC.**

17037 Aurora Ave. N
Shoreline, WA 98133



SERVICE DIRECT (206) 546-4926
MAIN LINE (206) 546-4171

INVOICE



PAGE 1

BELLEVUE, WA

HOME: [REDACTED] CONT: [REDACTED]

BUS: [REDACTED] CELL: [REDACTED]

SERVICE ADVISOR: 37 KARL S ALBAECK

COLOR	YEAR	MAKE/MODEL	VIN	LICENSE	MILEAGE IN / OUT	TAG	
ABT/PLATIN	11	KIA OPTIMA	KNAGM4A70B5		1582/1582	T701	
DEL. DATE	PROD. DATE	WARR. EXP.	PROMISED	PO NO.	RATE	PAYMENT	INV. DATE
24SEP11 DD			WAIT 29DEC11		0.00	CASH	29DEC11
R.O. OPENED		READY	OPTIONS: STR:13166				

LINE	OPCODE	TECH	TYPE	HOURS	LIST	NET	TOTAL
A							

A CUSTOMER STATES THAT IT IS EXCEEDINGLY EASY TO INADVERTANTLY SWITCH OFF HIS LIGHTS WHILE DRING AT NIGHT MAKING ANY LEFT TURNS, HE SPOKE WITH KIA MOTORS, SUGGESTED DEALER VISIT TO INSPECT.

03 BODY ELECTRICAL
145 ISPK

(N/C)
0.00

PARTS: 0.00 LABOR: 0.00 OTHER: 0.00 TOTAL LINE A: 0.00

CUSTOMERS CONCERN WAS WHEN YOU PUSH DOWN ON THE TURN SIGNAL SWITCH SOMETIMES THE HEADLAMPS GET TURNED OFF. THE CUSTOMER SHOWED HOW HE USES THE SWITCH. WHEN THE SWITCH IS TOUCHED BY HAND, YOU PUSH THE SWITCH DOWNWORD. THE HEADLAMP SWITCH IS AT THE END OF THE LEVER AND WHEN THE DOWNWORD MOTION IS MADE THE HEADLAMP ROTATION SHUTS OFF THE HEADLAMPS. TESTED SWITCH AND THE SWITCH IS OPERATING NORMALLY. THE DESIGN OF THE SWITCH IS THE CUSTOMERS CONCERN. CHECKED AGAINST OTHER VEHICLES AND THE SWITCH IS OPERATING THE SAME IN ALL OF THE VEHICLES TESTED. THE DEALER HAS NO WAY TO REPAIR. A NEW SWITCH WILL OPERATE THE SAME WAY.

B TOP UP WASHER FLUID.
01 MAINTENANCE

145 CPQ	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
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PARTS: 0.00 LABOR: 0.00 OTHER: 0.00 TOTAL LINE B: 0.00

TOPPED OFF FLUID.

1-800-337
4542

Certified Service

WARRANTY	SUPPLIES:	THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS	DESCRIPTION	TOTALS
GM PARTS AND LABOR WARRANTED FOR 12 MONTHS OR 12,000 MILES, WHICHEVER COMES FIRST.	A TOKEN CHARGE WILL BE INCLUDED FOR SUPPLIES USED ON YOUR VEHICLE. SUPPLIES INCLUDE: NUTS, BOLTS, RAGS, AEROSPRAY, SOLDER WIRE, TAPE, PINS, ETC., AND ANY HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE DISPOSAL SUCH AS ANITFREEZE, SOLVENT, ETC.	YOUR SATISFACTION IS OUR GOAL!	LABOR AMOUNT	0.00
			PARTS AMOUNT	0.00
THE INFORMATION CONTAINED ON THE ESTIMATE WORKSHEET, AND/OR REPAIR ORDER IS INCORPORATED HEREIN BY REFERENCE.		IF YOU AR NOT COMPLETELY SATISFIED FOR ANY REASON, CALL ME AT (206) 522-7661 OR EMAIL ME AT greg@chuckolsonchev.com	GAS, OIL, LUBE	0.00
			SUBLET AMOUNT	0.00
			MISC. CHARGES	0.00
			TOTAL CHARGES	0.00
			LESS INSURANCE	0.00
			SALES TAX	0.00
			PLEASE PAY THIS AMOUNT	0.00



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Repository
Reference No. 10442239

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name [REDACTED] Daytime Telephone Number [REDACTED] E-mail Address [REDACTED]
Address [REDACTED] Evening Telephone Number [REDACTED]
City BELLEVUE State WA Zip Code [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
KNAGM4A70B5 [REDACTED] Make KIA Model OPTIMA Model Year 2011
Date Purchased 9/24/11 Dealer's Name and Telephone Number CHUCK OLSON CHEVROLET KIA - 206-546-4171 Engine: No: Cylinders Fuel Type:
Original Owner Dealer's City SHORBLINE State WA Zip Code 98133
Transmission Type Antilock Brakes Powertrain Multiple Failure: OCCURS MANY TIMES Incident Date(s) 19-DEC-2011 MANY TIMES
 Cruise Control

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Vehicle Component Code: 120000 EXTERIOR LIGHTING Failure Mileage 1300 Failure Speed ALL SPEEDS

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: DOTM19ABC036) 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 0 Number of Deaths 0 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).

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PLEASE ALSO COMPEL KIA TO WARN ALL OWNERS OF THEIR VARIOUS MODELS THAT MAY HAVE THE SAME PROBLEM.

From:

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
Bellevue, WA



RETURN RECEIPT
REQUESTED

W48-226

US DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION, NVS-210
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20777-9382

