

U.S. Department
of TransportationNational Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

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

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

21-NOV-2013

Repository ☐

Reference No.

10553180

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name

Address

City CHICAGO

State IL

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

JTDKB20U53

Make

TOYOTA

Model

PRIUS

Model Year

2005

Date Purchased

Dealer's Name and Telephone Number

Engine:

No: Cylinders

Fuel Type:

Original Owner

Dealer's City

State

Zip Code

Transmission Type

☐ Antilock Brakes

Powertrain

Multiple Failure:

Incident Date(s)

12-SEP-2012

☐ Cruise Control

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Vehicle Component Code: 010000 STEERING

Failure Mileage

116000

Failure Speed

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: DOTM9ABC036)

☐ 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

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 2005 TOYOTA PRIUS. THE CONTACT STATED THAT WHILE TURNING, THERE WAS AN ABNORMAL VIBRATION FROM THE STEERING WHEEL WITHOUT WARNING. THE CONTACT MENTIONED THAT THE STEERING WHEEL REMAINED LOOSE AFTER THE FAILURE. THE VEHICLE WAS PREVIOUSLY SERVICED UNDER NHTSA CAMPAIGN ID NUMBER: 12V537000 (STEERING) BUT DID NOT RECTIFY THE FAILURE. THE VEHICLE WAS TAKEN TO A DEALER WHERE IT WAS DIAGNOSED THAT THE STEERING COLUMN NEEDED TO BE REPLACED. THE MANUFACTURER WAS CONTACTED ABOUT THE FAILURE. THE VEHICLE WAS NOT REPAIRED. THE APPROXIMATE FAILURE MILEAGE WAS 116,000 AND THE CURRENT MILEAGE WAS 131,000.

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.

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

SEE ATTACHMENT

VIN #: JTDKB20UX53

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

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WASHINGTON, DC

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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



Think your vehicle
has a safety defect?



If so:

Use the enclosed
form to file a report.

or visit:

www.safercar.gov

or call:

Vehicle Safety Hotline
888-327-4236



Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ)
U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

I had purchased a used 2005 Toyota Prius with 116,000 miles on the odometer from a dealer. Shortly after purchasing, it was apparent that upon reversing and turning the steering wheel completely, it would rattle slightly. There was a visible tug in the wheel when turned. This would only happen for full turns that typically required more than a 90 degree angle turn.

In early January 2013, I took my car in for an official Toyota Recall involving the steering extension shaft. I was unaware at the time, that the recall was just an inspection and nothing was changed. They did however, adjust something in the steering column which made the reported "tug" disappear. After two months, the issue returned. When I brought this matter up with Toyota, I was told that a full diagnosis had to be done at my expense.

In October of 2013, I wrote an official complaint to Toyota and it garnered the attention of Danica Sorenson, the secretary to Jim Lentz (Toyota North America CEO). She assured me that they would pay for the diagnosis and help settle the issue. My car was then subsequently diagnosed at a Toyota dealership and found to be in need of a new steering column. I was shocked to learn that the cost of the replacement was \$2800. I could not understand how the safety recall had temporarily fixed the problem but only to have it return again.

I pleaded with Danica Sorenson to issue another inspection and this time she sent their field technician to the same dealership. Upon completion of the inspection, the dealership called me to confirm that the field technician had diagnosed the same problem and they made a point to let me know that they were correct. However, when I asked for documentation or paperwork showing the field technician's report, they would not provide it. I inquired from Danica Sorenson and she affirmed that they could not provide me any supporting documentation. She did tell me, however, that Toyota would issue a one-time discount to me and cover 50% of the repairs. However, I could never get the dealership to provide an accurate quote on the work as the total cost changed every single time I called to inquire of the costs. I declined the offer for 50% coverage and demanded that they cover the full costs.

I demanded that Toyota fix the issue entirely and absorb the entire cost. I was unhappy because two other components of my steering have been replaced in the past via Toyota recalls, according to the Vehicle History Report in Toyota's database. The main issue seems to be with the steering column and the power steering motor but Toyota will NOT issue a full recall like they did for the later model (3rd Generation) Priuses (2010-2013). Upon further research, I found that 1st and 2nd Generation Priuses also have faulty steering columns. I learned that a faulty steering column can severely affect the lives of passengers in the vehicle if it fails at high speeds. It is quite evident that Toyota has been addressing smaller repairs rather than issuing a recall to fix this issue completely by offering a full an extensive recall program.

There is clear evidence on Prius forums that many owners of the 2nd Generation Prius suffer the same issues and have not been able to get Toyota to honor the repairs. Their steering components are clearly faulty and if a recall is not forced upon them, I fear that many lives will be at stake from this defect.