

Wednesday, May 21, 2014

Volkswagen Group of America
2200 Ferdinand Porsche Dr.
Herndon, VA 20171

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

Hello,

JUN 17 2014

My name is [REDACTED], and I would like to share a recent VW experience with you.

My wife and I are fans of VW. Our first car was a '66 Beetle, and we currently have a '12 GTI parked in our garage.

I've been looking for a capable tow vehicle to replace our '04 Toyota 4Runner and was excited to find the VW Touareg TDI with the factory hitch option has an advertised tow rating of up to 7,600 pounds. Our 4Runner has a towing capacity of 7,000 pounds and pulls our 5,000 pound trailer nicely so it seemed the Touareg TDI would be a perfect replacement!

We shopped around and found a beautiful pre-owned, certified '13 Touareg TDI with the factory hitch package and only 4,725 miles! On 5/16, we looked at the car, took it for a test drive, negotiated a deal and signed the papers to take ownership with the plan to return to the dealership this Thursday, 5/22 to take delivery of the vehicle. Since it was a "done deal", the dealership was kind enough to allow me to leave with the Touareg owner's manual so I could start to become more familiar with its many features.

Imagine my shock when I turned to pages 172 and 176 in the manual and read the following – "Use only a weight-carrying trailer hitch. Never install a weight distributing or load equalizing trailer hitch on your vehicle. The vehicle is not designed for this kind of trailer hitch". It goes on to talk about potential personal injury, damage to the car, and separation of the item being towed from the car. Seems like VERY important information to know and understand before making a deal and driving away in a new Touareg TDI!

To say the very least, your advertised tow rating of up to 7,600 pounds is extremely misleading! I am not aware of any "towable" item (boat, camper, etc.) of over 4,000 pounds that would not require the use of a weight-distributing hitch! Yet, one can never be used on the Touareg.

I called your VW Information Center and confirmed what I had just read. When I expressed my shock at this information, the representative said "you're not the first person we've heard this from". Think it might be an issue you need to address?

Unfortunately, we had no choice but to call the dealership and cancel the purchase of the '13 Touareg as it would not be suitable for our towing requirements. Very disappointing!

ET
6/18/14
SMD

My complaint – I was unable to find anything in any of your sales information that spelled out this hitch/towing limitation prior to finding it in the owner's manual after we had completed the deal to purchase the vehicle. I have to wonder how many owners are out there on the road today towing in a very unsafe and dangerous manner because they were misinformed by your sales information and did not take the time to read the "fine print" in the owner's manual. Incidentally, the dealer was not aware of this limitation until I brought it to his attention!

In the spirit of safety, I would like to make the following suggestions:

1. Update your sales information to include a footnote with the 7,600 pound towing capacity to clearly identify the very important hitch limitation.
2. Send a notice to all existing owners of Touareg TDIs with the factory hitch to inform them of this critical limitation.

Thank you for your time and I hope you take proper action to correct this issue.

Sincerely,



Bloomsburg, PA [REDACTED]

CC: National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, DC 20594

6/10/14

Please find attached a letter I recently sent to VW of America with a copy to the NTSB. I now realize I should have included your organization in the original mailing and apologize for my oversight.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

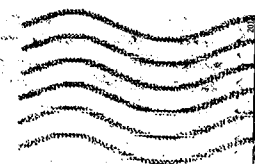


Bloomsburg, PA



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National Highway Transportation Safety Administration

1200 New Jersey Ave, SE

West Building

Washington, DC 20590

