

CL-10662825-9549

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

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

October 7, 2014

Reference: Safety issue Subaru Forester 2005, Vin: JF 1 SG63605H [REDACTED]

DEC - 5 2014

Gentlemen,

I'm writing to advise the Board of a safety issue with the Subaru Symmetrical All-Wheel drive on my 2005 Forester, that no doubt affects many other Subaru All-Wheel drive vehicles. At first glance the defect, described in attached letters to Subaru America, doesn't seem to be much of a problem. However, the violent shuddering of the front of the automobile in tight turns at relatively low speeds can easily lead to loss of control, resulting in a potential vehicle or property crash.

Unfortunately, Subaru of America has chosen to ignore the problem, described in my detailed letter to the company, and has not responded to my two letters. I believe NTSB should be made aware of this safety defect in Subaru All-Wheel drive vehicles, and require Subaru of America to remedy the defect at no cost to the automobile owners.

I look forward to your response to my concerns.

Best Regards,

[REDACTED]
Lafayette, IN [REDACTED]

Ph: [REDACTED]

e-m: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Copy to: Subaru of America
Subaru Plaza
P O Box 6000
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-6000
Attn: National Vehicle Service Director

NH
12514
SMD

SUBARU OF AMERICA
Subaru Plaza
P O Box 6000
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-6000
Attn: National Vehicle Service Director

 COPY

Reference: 2005 Subaru Forester 2.5x, Vin: JF 1 SG63605H [REDACTED]

July 19, 2014

Gentlemen,

I am the proud owner of the Subaru 2005 Forester with Symmetrical all wheel drive, purchased new from Rohrmann Automotive in Lafayette, IN. It has been a very reliable automobile and a delight to drive both short and long distances.

However, in approximately the last 14 months I began to notice "shuddering" at the front of the vehicle when executing sharp (80 to 90 degree) turns, both left and right, forward and reverse, at very low speeds, as in leaving a driveway to enter a street at right angles, or leaving a parking space to enter a roadway. The vehicle has just 39709 original miles on the odometer

I visited the Rohrmann service shop to determine the problem, and after much deliberation, and driving the vehicle, checking tire inflation and treadwear, it was announced the all wheel valving mechanism housed inside the transmission case was failing and should be replaced. It was estimated that the cost to me would be about \$2,000 which I can ill afford as a retired person.

My daughter in St. Louis has a 2004 Subaru Forester with about 140,000 miles on the odometer, and the vehicle does NOT "shudder" as mine does when executing sharp turns at very low speeds. She even drove my vehicle and remarked on the "shuddering".

I submit that Subaru of America should absorb the cost to replace with new the all wheel valving mechanism on my Subaru Forester with only 39,709 miles on the odometer, particularly as my daughters 2004 Forester with 140,000 miles does NOT exhibit the "shuddering" effect.

I believe the sales pitch that Subaru has had for some time since introducing the Symmetrical all wheel drive technology should be carefully reviewed in light of premature and expensive failure of the valving mechanism, as in my Forester. I wonder if other Foresters or other Subaru all wheel drive vehicles have experienced low mileage AWD failure ? Or, do I own a "lemon" Shades of GM ! On my recommendation, a neighbor around the corner recently purchased a Forester. I hope she doesn't regret the purchase. The reputation of Subaru and its vaunted Symmetrical All Wheel Drive is on the line !

I look forward to your response, and best regards,

[REDACTED]
Lafayette, IN [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

 **COPY**

SUBARU OF AMERICA
Subaru Plaza
P O Box 6000
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-6000
Attn: National Vehicle Service Director

Reference: 2005 Subaru Forester 2.5x, Vin: JF 1 SG63605H [REDACTED]

September 15, 2014

Gentlemen, nearly two months ago, I wrote to your company regarding a shuddering problem with my 2005 Subaru, diagnosed by my local Subaru dealer as an all-wheel drive valve failure estimated to cost me \$2000.

To date, no response has been received from Subaru of America. Should I hear nothing within 10 days from the date you receive this letter, I shall proceed to notify the National Transportation Safety Board of the safety problem that is undoubtedly not unique to my Subaru.

I await further word from your company.

Regards,

[REDACTED]
Lafayette, IN

Ph. [REDACTED]

e-m [REDACTED]

Enclosure: Copy of July 19, 2014 Letter