



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

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

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 16-DEC-2014	Repository <input type="checkbox"/>
	Reference No. 10664555

Daytime Telephone Number	E-mail Address
Evening Telephone Number	

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name: [Redacted]

Address: [Redacted]

City: ROANOKE State: VA 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 3C4FY48B94T [Redacted]	Make CHRYSLER	Model PT CRUISER	Model Year 2004
Date Purchased	Dealer's Name and Telephone Number no longer in existence	Engine: No: Cylinders 4	Fuel Type: gas
Original Owner <input type="checkbox"/>	Dealer's City	State	Zip Code
Transmission Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Antilock Brakes <input type="checkbox"/> Cruise Control	Powertrain	Multiple Failure: Incident Date(s) 21-NOV-2014

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Vehicle Component Code: 140000 AIR BAGS	Failure Mileage 160000	Failure Speed 55
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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)	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Equipment <input type="checkbox"/> 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 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Fire <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Number of Persons Injured 0	Number of Deaths 0	Reported to Police N
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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 2004 CHRYSLER PT CRUISER. THE CONTACT STATED THAT WHILE DRIVING AT APPROXIMATELY 55 MPH, THERE WAS A LOUD BANG AND THE AIR BAG WARNING LIGHT ILLUMINATED. IN ADDITION, THE CONTACT STATED THAT THERE WAS AN AROMA OF SMOKE INSIDE THE VEHICLE. THE VEHICLE WAS NOT DIAGNOSED OR REPAIRED. THE MANUFACTURER WAS NOTIFIED OF THE FAILURE. THE FAILURE MILEAGE WAS 160,000.

There was a strong shock wave that hit me in the chest, like a gunshot. Propellant for airbag/seat belt system exploded but while both driver + passenger-side seat belts "locked" in tight position, the airbag did not deploy. Thought I had been shot.

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.

888-327-4236



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

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Consumer:

NVS-216rr

As a follow-up to your report to the Vehicle Safety Hotline (VSH), we have recorded your information on the enclosed Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ) form. Please review the form and make changes, additions and corrections as necessary. Additionally, please provide a more detailed description of the failure(s) you reported that you believe relevant to safety. Also, if available, include copies of repair invoices, letters to the manufacturer, or any other document related to the problem(s) you reported. If a crash or fire occurred, include a copy of the police or fire department report.

It is helpful to be as thorough as possible in your report so that our ability to use your report will be maximized. If you do not have the information, it is not necessary to complete all the boxes. However, it is very difficult to identify the scope of a vehicle problem unless the vehicle identification number (VIN) is known. The VIN is located inside the vehicle on the dashboard adjacent to the left (driver's side) of the windshield pillar and on the drivers' door or the driver's door jam. It may also be listed on a dealer repair invoice or your insurance or registration cards. When reporting a tire problem, the brand name, tire line and complete tire size should be included. Be certain to provide the DOT tire identification number. It is usually located near the rim flange of the tire on either side of the tire.

We do not make your personal information (name, address, phone numbers, etc.) available to the general public. However, if we open an investigation that involves your vehicle, we will provide the manufacturer of your vehicle with a complete copy of your report. The information you provide may assist the manufacturer and NHTSA in determining if a safety-related defect exists.

Any information provided is entirely voluntary. There is no consequence or penalty of any kind if you do not wish to provide it. We seek this information to develop both statistical and investigative evidence that will help identify potential safety related problems in vehicles or vehicle equipment, e.g., tires, child safety seats, jacks, etc.

When completed, please fold and staple or tape the form so that the pre-addressed portion of the form is on the outside. If a larger envelope is used, tape the VOQ form to the larger envelope so that the pre-addressed portion of the form is showing.

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If further assistance is needed, please contact the VSH at their toll-free number, 1-888-327-4236.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Randy Reid Chief
Correspondence Research Division
Office of Defects Investigation
Enforcement

Enclosure: VOQ

Re: Nov. 21, 2014 incident involving my 2004 PT Cruiser, VIN # 3C4FY48B94T [REDACTED] bought slightly used in 2005 from [now closed] Dave Sarmadi Mitsubishi of 1830 W. Main St., Salem, VA 24153. That dealership moved to Roanoke and then Staunton. Dealership is in no way involved. After I bought the car in 2005 I never took it back there because Duncan Chrysler Dealership in my own county, Franklin Co., VA, was much closer (an hour closer). Duncan Chrysler and Ford serviced this car for ten years until I moved to Roanoke, VA, in 2013 and switched to Berglund Chrysler Jeep, 2525 Franklin Rd., Roanoke, VA 24014. I put all this in to say that the original dealership had nothing to do with the car or the years I drove it (2005-2014).

I had a major tune-up done at Berglund Chrysler Jeep in the spring of 2014 (over \$2000) and the air bag system was not checked, as it is not on the inspection list for the State of VA or part of a regular tune-up.

The air bag light had been coming on and off, not just when the car was started, and randomly. I cannot PROVE that Berglund's service people said not to worry about that light, that it was like a check-engine light, sometimes coming on and going off when nothing is wrong. But they did. No matter now!

I was driving to NC on 21 November 2014, going the highway speed of 55 in the right lane (or I would have died), when suddenly there was an explosion and I was hit hard in the upper right chest, as if I had been shot by a shotgun...which is what I thought had happened. It HURT. I looked for a bullet hole in the glass and for a wound or blood on me and saw nothing, but I did smell a very strong smell of what I would describe as gunpowder. I had no idea what had happened and was so disoriented that it was all I could do to hold the car straight in the lane I was in, close to the shoulder. If I had been in the left lane I would have been hit by the speeding semi trucks over there; I had just pulled over to the right lane before this happened, so they could pass me, at 60 or higher.

I was so disoriented I could not remember how to use my Iphone, which was next to me. I wanted to call home. But I could not. I was shaking and short of breath and scared. I looked up the road and realized that by some twist of Fate, I was within a mile of the Duncan Ford and Chrysler Dealership that I had used from 2005 until my move to Roanoke in 2013! So I kept the car steady and pulled into their lot. I stumbled into their service area, where Mike, the man in charge and who had worked on my car and my late husband's PT Cruiser convertible since 2005, saw me, and asked [REDACTED] "Are you all right?" He hurried over. I was barely able to stand and had trouble talking. [I now know the shock wave, blast injury, had really slammed me

in a way that made it hard for me to talk or walk.] I said, "NO, I am not all right, but go to my car and smell it, right now." Three of the men hurried out to it and smelled the front area where the pedals are and confirmed that it had a smell of gunshot powder. No one, at that time, thought to check the seat belt.

I told them I thought the explosion had been a gunshot, but when I realized it had not been, that it had to be the airbag system exploding. I now know, from safecar.gov, that it was the propellant from the airbag/seatbelt system that exploded. Why? BECAUSE IT WAS 10 YEARS OLD! It was an old airbag system that had never deployed, never been in an accident, but whose airbag warning light had been coming on and off randomly, never staying on more than a second, for months.

By the way, since I had no "wounds" and had not wrecked or crashed or hit anyone, during the episode, I did not go to see a doctor. I came home and later looked up what I thought had happened, and found "blast injury" as the problem, and kept an eye on my breathing, as it would be the lungs most affected. As far as I know, there are no longterm effects. My concern IS THAT THIS NOT HAPPEN TO OTHERS WITH AN AGING AIRBAG SYSTEM. I COULD HAVE CRASHED. That is why I am filling out the forms for you.

I left my car with them. I asked them NOT to look at it until I had notified Chrysler and a lawyer. They drove it to their back lot, but without putting the seatbelt on, I found out later...thus, they did not know that both seatbelts in the front seat were locked and could not be extended to be hooked in. We found that out a month later when I came to get the car, after having my initial claim denied by Chrysler after their special Inspector had not found a problem. [We learned later that he, also, did not get in the car and try to drive it, or he would have noticed the seatbelt problem.] He had used only a computer to check the car.

Chrysler originally denied my claim, but in the same letter said they hoped I was recovering from my injuries. No lawyer, by the way, in this region would even listen to my case, saying it was a "new problem" and would require "too much research."

I went to pick up my car and when I sat in the driver's seat and went to hook up the seatbelt, it would not extend. I called Mike back out and he tried, too. Neither of us thought to try the passenger side seatbelt. That model does not have a passenger side airbag.

I told him I would and could not drive it home (45 minutes) without a seatbelt. He agreed and I left it with him. We agreed I would re-contact Chrysler, which I did, leaving a detailed phone message on their Legal phone line, that was on the letter I had received denying my claim.

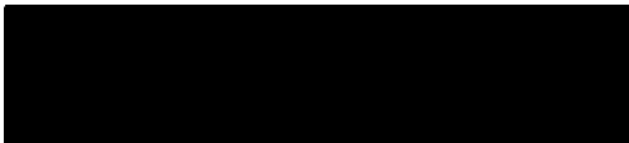
The next day I received a very nice call from a lawyer named Mr. Aubin, in Michigan, saying they would look at it again. As it turned out, Chrysler said the inspection report had been interpreted incorrectly, and that they would, now, replace the systems involved, and pay for the repair, and pay me back if I rented a car for no more than \$35 a day. So I told Duncan Chrysler to wait to hear from Chrysler, and when I dropped in that dealership several days ago there was my car in the garage being fixed. The service man told me the driver's side had been repaired but when they went to finish, the airbag light was on; as they wondered, they checked the passenger side and found out that the seatbelt had locked there, too. So as of right now, they are repairing the passenger side.

I signed paperwork saying I would not litigate this, against Chrysler. Fine. I was not trying to get \$. I was trying to get it across to them [and to you] that all PT Cruisers of this age with old airbag systems MIGHT ALSO EXPLODE, and that other drivers might well crash and die!

I am selling my car as soon as it is fixed. It will be in very good shape. I do not ever want to drive it again. I have a PERFECT driving record, am [REDACTED] and love to drive. But I am scared of that car. I will never drive a PT Cruiser again. And that car was the best car I ever drove, until this event. I have owned and driven [always new] three kinds of Fords, two kinds of VWs, two kinds of Mercedes, a Lincoln Navigator, two Volvos, and now a Toyota Sienna, which I just bought used, and love.

Thank you for listening. I do not think this report in any way violates my agreement with Chrysler. They are helping. I am sure they want safety for their car owners, too. I hope this model can be recalled for people to replace the airbags if they are more than 5 years old! That should be the policy on all cars. And the industry's decision in the late 1980s to agree that an airbag will last the lifetime of the car, is WRONG, and unsafe. No one would say the original tires or windshield wipers or battery would "last the lifetime of the car"! And look at how much more complex the airbag/seatbelt systems are! And their propellants. I feel very lucky to be alive.

Thank you.



Roanoke, VA



POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE
PERMIT NO. 1000 ROANOKE VA 24060

FRI 09 JAN 2015 PM



Nat. Highway
Traffic Safety
Admin.

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