



U.S. Department
of Transportation

National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

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1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

March 13, 2017

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
United States Senator
801 West Superior Avenue, Suite 1400
Cleveland, OH 44113

NEF-109 rrr
Ref. No. 10949409

Dear Senator Brown:

Thank you for your correspondence on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED], concerning his model year (MY) 2005 Hyundai Sonata. Your letter was forwarded to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). I am pleased to respond.

NHTSA is the Federal agency responsible for improving safety on our Nation's highways. We are authorized to order manufacturers to recall and repair motor vehicles or motor vehicle equipment when our investigations indicate that they contain safety defects in their design, construction, or performance. We also monitor the adequacy of manufacturers' recall campaigns. In order for the agency to initiate an investigation, we look carefully at the body of consumer complaints and other available data to determine whether a defect trend may exist. We do not have authority to act on isolated problems or resolve disputes between individual owners, dealers, or manufacturers.

[REDACTED] states that during a recent safety inspection, his independent mechanic noticed that the sub-frame cradle of his MY 2005 Hyundai Sonata was badly corroded. His mechanic tried to locate a recall for the problem, which revealed a 2009 recall for MY 1999 through MY 2004 Hyundai Sonata vehicles (NHTSA Safety Recall Campaign No. 09V-124).

[REDACTED] took his vehicle to a local Hyundai dealer for further inspection and initially the dealer advised that the repair would be authorized. Later that day the dealer informed him that Hyundai denied the claim because his vehicle is a 2005 Sonata, which is not included in the recall. [REDACTED] wants to know why MY 2005 Sonata vehicles were not included in Recall 09V-124 if owners are experiencing the same corrosion problem. In addition, he requests that NHTSA identify and recall all model year Sonata vehicles that may be affected by corroded sub-frames.

Recall 09V-124 referenced by [REDACTED] is a regional recall limited to certain MY 1999 through MY 2004 (built before December 2003) Hyundai Sonata vehicles originally sold or currently registered in salt belt States. The recall addresses a problem caused by road salt and water that enters portions of the front sub-frame. This results in internal corrosion of the sub-frame and may lead to steering pull, tire misalignment, lower control arm detachment, and related noises. Hyundai began using a different front sub-frame design in November 2003, so MY 2004 vehicles built after that time were not recalled.

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Please note that when NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) reviewed this problem in 2008 (Engineering Analysis 08-016, resume enclosed), there were no complaints for MY 2005 Sonatas, but a substantial number of complaints for vehicles with the previous front sub-frame design. Since then ODI received one complaint for this problem in 2013, but we recently received 6 more complaints in 2016.

ODI is re-examining all available data to determine whether the scope of Recall 09V-124 needs to be expanded to include MY 2005 Sonata vehicles with the redesigned front sub-frame. However, no determinations have been reached at this time. For [REDACTED] information, we enclosed a brochure explaining NHTSA's investigation and recall process, which is also on our website at www.safercar.gov. The information you provided has been entered into our database. It will be considered with future reports to identify any safety defect trends that may require our attention.

NHTSA received a correspondence from Senator Rob Portman regarding [REDACTED] problem and we sent the Senator a similar response. I hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions, please contact me or Mr. Jeffrey M. Giuseppe, Acting Associate Administrator for Enforcement, at (202) 493-2631.

Sincerely yours,



Essie Wagner
Deputy Director, Governmental Affairs,
Policy and Strategic Planning

Enclosures

cc: Washington Office



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ODI RESUME

Investigation: EA08-016
Prompted By: PE08-029
Date Opened: 08/21/2008 Date Closed: 04/20/2009
Principal Investigator: Derek Rinehardt
Subject: Front Sub-frame Corrosion

Manufacturer: Hyundai Motor Company, Hyundai Caribbean-Puerto Rico
Products: MY 1999 – 2004 Hyundai Sonata in salt belt states
Population: 165,000

Problem Description: Front sub-frame corrosion may result in collapse or separation of the right front wheel.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	194	647	793
Crashes/Fires:	0	0	0
Injury Incidents:	0	1	1
# Injuries:	0	1	1
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	2,039	2,039

*Description of Other: Warranty Claims for sub-frame replacement.

Action: This Engineering Analysis is closed. Recall 09V-124.

Engineer: Derek Rinehardt
Div. Chief: Jeffrey Quandt
Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

DR

Date: 04/20/2009
Date: 04/20/2009
Date: 04/20/2009

Summary:

In a letter dated April 14, 2009, Hyundai-Kia America Technical Center, Inc (Hyundai) notified NHTSA that Hyundai is conducting a safety recall of model year (MY) 1999 through 2004 Hyundai Sonata vehicles manufactured prior to November 20, 2003 that are registered and operated in the following "salt belt" states and the District of Columbia: Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Hyundai is recalling the vehicles to remedy a condition where internal corrosion of the front sub-frame may lead to separation of the lower control arm at the forward mounting point and/or separation of the axle from the transaxle. This could result in a loss of vehicle control and/or vehicle disablement. The sub-frames will be inspected in the recalled vehicles using a procedure developed by Hyundai to measure metal thickness. Parts with perforations from corrosion or with metal below the specified thickness will be replaced with redesigned sub-frames. If the minimum metal thickness is met, drainage holes and rust proofing material will be added to the existing sub-frame.

ODI's analysis of complaint data revealed that 98% of the consumer complaints were from vehicles either originally sold or operated in salt belt states. Similarly 99.7% of the warranty claims were from vehicles originally sold or operated in salt belt states.

ODI identified 105 reports of lower control arm detachment and/or axle separation from the transaxle through analysis of warranty and complaint information and consumer interviews. One hundred three (103) of the 105 incidents involved vehicles in states covered by the recall.

In addition to the subject vehicles, Hyundai also noted in the April 14, 2009 letter that MY 2001 through 2004 XG300 and XG350 were also being recalled as they were manufactured with sub-frames similar in design the subject vehicles.

Based on Hyundai's decision to conduct a safety recall this Engineering Analysis is closed.