

OCT 17 2018

CL-11143111-1046

[REDACTED]
Lakewood Ranch, FL
[REDACTED]

October 3, 2018

To: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Re: 2015 Toyota Highlander Fire

To Whom it May Concern:

2015 Toyota Highlander Interior Headliner BURNS & MELTS WITHOUT WARNING TOYOTA DENIES ALL LIABILITY!

Toyota, Ms. Nekil Montgomery, Legal Claims Handler, Plano, TX states,
"it is an unfortunate incident".
See enclosed/attached Toyota letter

Toyota Motor North America, Inc. (Toyota) has a safety issue with their Highlander, in my opinion. All purchasers of this vehicle should have been and should be, in the future, warned about the potential burning of the car's interior headliner! Toyota's own inspection specialist admits and confirms fire damage to the vehicle as noted in Ms. Montgomery's letter.

SEE ENCLOSED PHOTOS

- 1) Toyota should have known the possibility of headliners burning was real
- 2) Toyota should have placed warning labels in the cars, owner's manuals and sales associates should have notified all potential buyers that this condition existed and still exists so they can make an informed buying decision

Toyota will not accept any liability and expect me to pay \$2,507 to have the headliner replaced! This is a defectively engineered product with safety implications to all consumers who purchase this vehicle.

The dealership service associates claim that something reflective in the back of this car magnified the sun's rays to the point that the headliner burned and melted along with the air conditioning vent! They refuse to tell me at what temperature a headliner burns and melts. Toyota expects me to believe I created this safety issue. WHO in their conscious thought or "right minds" would want their car to catch fire?

Assume for one moment, that something in the back of that vehicle could reflect the sun's rays to such a magnitude as to catch the car on fire, it is then logical to assume Toyota should have known this and provided all car owners with a non-reflective material in the vehicle to cover stored items! No warnings; No Labels; Nothing noted in the Owner's Manual

The service people at Gettle Toyota, Lakewood Ranch, FL and Toyota Field Technical Specialist from Jacksonville, FL., Juan Diaz, REFUSE to acknowledge that in the back of this SUV, Toyota Highlander, are a minimum of 3 (three) reflective chrome items which could have caused the fire. They are:

- a) Four (4) Headrest Posts made of chrome that when the headrest is lifted are exposed to sunlight (photo)
- b) The square chrome pieces that are used to tie or tether materials in the back of the vehicle when the rear seats are lowered into the flat position (photo)
- c) The chrome seat belt buckle that lays flat on rear inside wall when not in use (photo directly opposite of the damaged headliner)

Please note: Items a, b and c are in line or could possibly be in line, depending on the sun's angle, with the damaged headliner.

As a consumer I ask myself, why was my complaint immediately turned over to the Toyota Legal Team according to a statement by Mr. Diaz, the Field Technical Specialist, if Toyota had no knowledge of this issue?

Other facts:

- 1) The rear windows have factory installed tinted privacy glass as noted on the car's invoice.
- 2) I had the windows professionally tinted by a local Sarasota, FL company. And yet with both items 1 and 2, the headliner still burned.
- 3) The burn and melting was first noticed after the vehicle sat outside a Military Museum parking area located in Punta Gorda, FL. There was no owner items that were reflective in the vehicle that day. August 14, 2018
- 4) Upon noticing damage, August 14, 2018, an appointment was made with Gettle Toyota.
- 5) August 15, 2018, 4:30 pm, Toyota North America, Inc, Plano, TX notified of the safety issue: Case # [REDACTED]
- 6) Appointment date August 16, 2018. Gettel denies it is a vehicle problem and "something shiny" caused it.
- 7) August 27, 2018, Field Technical Specialist, Juan Diaz inspects the vehicle and states to customer, we will hear from the Toyota Legal team.
- 8) October 1, 2018, Toyota's Ms. Montgomery calls it an unfortunate incident and denies the claim.

Toyota denied my claim which will now cost me, a retiree, over \$2,500 to repair! But what about the new Mom with babies and bills who carry the stroller in the back of this vehicle? Can she afford a \$2,500 expense? Or what about those requiring wheel chair or transport chair assistance and store these items in the back of this vehicle? Some of the products have "SHINY" parts that "REFLECT" sunlight! Can those individuals afford a \$2,500 expense?

Though Toyota expects loyalty, they do not return that loyalty. My spouse and I have owned and operated a Corolla, this is our 2nd Highlander, a Sienna van and a Camry and we have a Prius V. For that loyalty, Toyota turns their back on us and a SAFETY Issue!

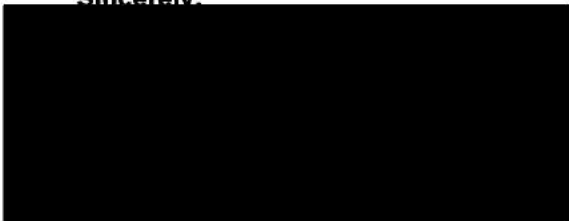
Toyota North America profits were over \$3 billion in 2017 as seen in their financial statements I am sure their senior managers were compensated quite well for such results on the backs of the consumer! This might even make one think the attorneys are paid a commission, in addition to salary.

What do I expect to occur from this safety issue?

From this information, my expectation is your agency will investigate this issue and require Toyota to notify potential buyers of this vehicle, to have a recall where labels can be applied to the rear of these vehicles notifying of potential fire hazard and a non-reflective blanket or cloth (Toyota provided) so any "shiny" items can be covered when storing items in these vehicles. And as a measure of goodwill for loyalty, the headliner should be repaired at Toyota's expense.

This issue needs, in my opinion, immediate attention to avoid any future damage and perhaps a larger disaster.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature area.

TOYOTA

Nekli Montgomery
Direct Phone: (469) 292-2951
Fax: (310) 381-8982

Toyota Motor North America, Inc.
6565 Headquarters Drive
Plano, TX 75021

October 1, 2018

Sent via email to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Lakewood Ranch, FL [REDACTED]

RE: Date of Incident: August 14, 2018
 Vehicle: 2015 Toyota Highlander
 VIN: 5TDYKRFH2FS [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

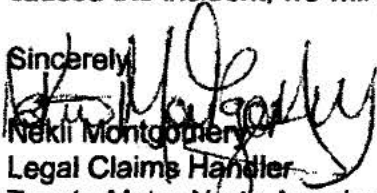
We are writing in response to the concerns you expressed regarding the above 2015 Highlander.

Based on the information provided, you were driving when you noticed the A/C not working properly. You arrived at your location and left the vehicle for about 2-3 hours. Upon leaving the location, the vehicle wasn't cooling properly and the back rear vent appeared to be rusted or burnt. You believe the wiring channel of wires in the roof failed.

The vehicle was inspected on August 27, 2018 at Gettel Toyota of Lakewood. The inspection confirmed that the vehicle sustained fire damage to the passenger rear (3rd row seat) air vent and headliner, with a burnt mark about 160mm across and 12-15 mm wide, but the cause of the fire could not be determined at that time. The burned/melted condition was only present on the exterior side of the components. The vehicle was test driven and there was no evidence to indicate that a vehicle defect caused this incident.

We are sorry to learn about this unfortunate incident. At this time, we must respectfully deny the claim. We trust your insurance company will handle your claim appropriately, and if you or they have information or evidence to support that a defect caused the incident, we will gladly review it.

Sincerely,


Nekli Montgomery
Legal Claims Handler
Toyota Motor North America, Inc.



5959 E. State Rd. 64 • Bradenton, Florida 34208
Telephone (941) 567-1080

CUSTOMER NO.	ADVISOR JIMMY MANNS	TAG NO.	INVOICE DATE 08/16/18
LABOR RATE	LICENSE NO.	MILEAGE 36,892	COLOR /
YEAR / MAKE / MODEL 15/TOYOTA TRUCK/HIGHLANDER/4DR FWD V	VEHICLE I.D. NO. 5 T D Y K R F H 2 F S	DELIVERY DATE	DELIVERY MILES
SELLING DEALER NO.	PRODUCTION DATE	R.O. DATE 08/16/18	
MV NUMBER: 85214			MO:

LABOR & PARTS

J# 1 5170201
CUSTOMER STATES THAT THERE IS FIRE DAMAGE TO THE HEADLINER ABOVE THE THIRD ROW PASSENGER SIDE SEAT. APPEARS AS IF A WIRE OR WIRES OVER HEATED AND CAUGHT FIRE DAMAGING THE HEADLINER. CUSTOMER NOTICED IT A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO. CUSTOMER HAS NO RECOLLECTION OF THIS HAPPENING WHEN THEY WERE IN THE VEHICLE. MUST HAVE HAPPENED WHEN VEHICLE WAS UNOCCUPIED. CUSTOMER HAS CASE NUMBER WITH TOYOTA. CASE #

AFTER TAKING APART AND INSPECTING WE FOUND THAT THE BURN IS ONLY ON THE OUT SIDE OF THE HEADLINER, THERE ARE NO BURN MARKS ON THE BACK SIDE OF THE HEAD LINER. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT SOMETHING SHINY WAS IN THE BACK AND REFLECTED THE SUN LIGHT UP ONTO THE HEADLINER AND CAUSED THE BURN. RECOMMEND REPLACING THE HEAD LINER. PARTS AND LABOR TO DO SO IS \$ 2,507.00. PARTS WOULD HAVE TO BE ORDERED AND WOULD BE AVAILABLE WITHIN TWO TO THREE DAYS FROM ORDER DATE.

JOB # 1 TOTAL LABOR & PARTS 0.00

CUSTOMER STATES SOUND SYSTEM IS FOREVER SHUTTING DOWN AND REBOOTING WHEN LISTENING TO IT. PLEASE INSPECT. FOUND UPDATE FOR RADIO SOFTWARE. INSTALLED IT, SHOULD CORRECT PROBLEM. PROVIDED AT NO CHARGE FOR CUSTOMER CARE.

JOB # 2 TOTAL LABOR & PARTS 0.00

COMMENTS

X06Q20P9WD:web created 2018-08-14 04:36:46pm taken by

TECHNICIAN CERTIFICATION

3006

SCOTT BUSKE

05

We Accept:



Our #1 Commitment:
Customer Satisfaction!
Thank You for
Allowing Us
to Serve You!

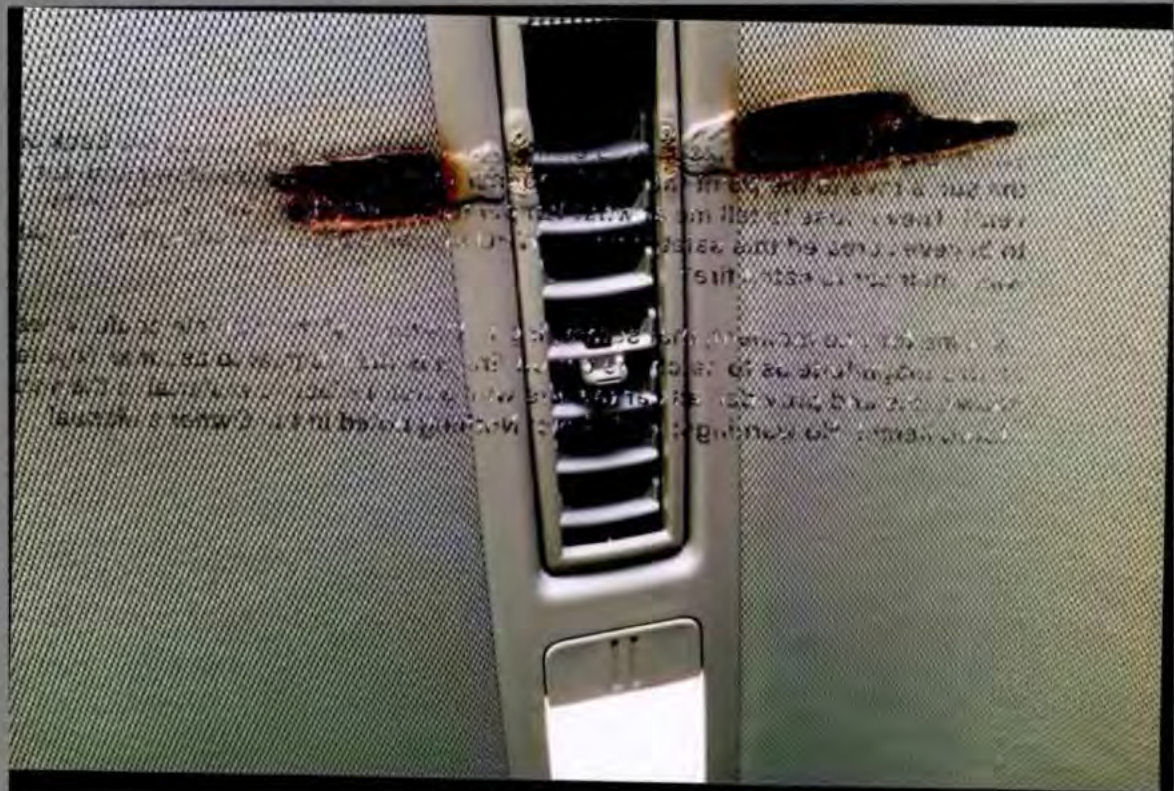
ALL PARTS ARE NEW
UNLESS OTHERWISE
INDICATED.

SERVICE HOURS

MONDAY - FRIDAY
7:00 AM TO 6:00 PM
SATURDAY
7:00 AM TO 4:00 PM
SUNDAY
8:00 AM TO 2:00 PM

BODY SHOP

941-756-5511 ext 1501









[REDACTED]
Lakewood Ranch, FL [REDACTED]

FT MYERS FL 339

05 OCT 2018 PM 4 L



National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Safety Issues - - Toyota Highlander
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
West Building
Washington, DC 20590

20590-

