

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

From: [hotline-inquiries, NHTSA \(NHTSA\)](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: case number 11222432ODI
Date: Tuesday, July 2, 2019 10:06:49 AM
Attachments: [File a Vehicle Safety Complaint Safercar National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\).pdf](#)
[REDACTED] [AccidentPictures.pdf](#)
[REDACTED] [Pictures.pdf](#)

Good Morning [REDACTED],

The attached documents are associated with ODI 11222432.

Thank you

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 1, 2019 5:53 PM
To: hotline-inquiries, NHTSA (NHTSA) <HotLine-Inquiries@dot.gov>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Subject: case number 11222432ODI

Good Day,

The following are the attachments and email for escalated ticket# [REDACTED]

This is what was submitted on behalf of [REDACTED], complaint
number [REDACTED]

thank you

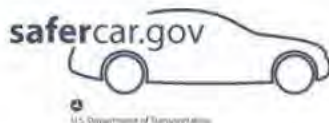
[REDACTED]

[File a Vehicle Safety Complaint Safercar National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\).pdf](#) 106.7KB
[REDACTED] [Pictures.pdf](#) 1.1MB
[REDACTED] [Pictures.pdf](#) 3.6MB

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Complaint Number:** [REDACTED]**Vehicle Identification Number:** jthbf30g730 [REDACTED]**Your Vehicle's Make Model and Model Year:** LEXUS ES300 2003

Note: Your VIN, make, model, and year are all protected under the Privacy Act.

What part of your car was affected? Engine**What happened?**

Sir/Madam, I am trying to help my friends Margaret and Michel Arotcharen, long time residents of Huntington Beach and a very sweet couple. Peggy was driving her husband to a doctor's appointment and due to a fault in the engine (there is a recall and they were not informed), the engine caught on fire. If it hadn't been for the driver behind them who ran to them and got them quickly out of the car and walked them to safety, the outcome would have been very bleak. They are an elderly couple and the husband, Michelle, has great difficulty walking and the car burned very quickly. They, thank God, made it to safety in time only to watch their car burn. They informed Toyota and since they are on fixed income asked Toyota for help with the purchase of another used reliable car (the Lexus they were driving was 15 years old but in good condition and more than enough car for their trips to local stores or doctor appointments. Surprisingly, Toyota only responded with one letter from customer service. Peggy's follow up calls and letters to customer service, ECO Mark Templin were never acknowledged or answered. Please help this couple believe in humanity again. Toyota is a reputable company and to have something like this happen without so much as a phone call from the company is surprising to all that know of this case. I am attaching all the evidence: pictures, copies of letters for your reference. Please provide case number. Thank you so much for your help. Alice Lastuvka for Margaret and Michel Arotcharen

Files you uploaded.

20190311_Re Date of Loss Vehicle VIN.pdf

When did this happen? 09/26/2018**Was there a Crash?** No**Was there a Fire?** Yes**Was there an injury or fatality?** No**How fast were you going? (in mph)** 40**About how many miles were on your vehicle at the time of the incident?** 000000**First Name:** [REDACTED]**Last Name:** [REDACTED]**Email:** [REDACTED]**Address 1:** [REDACTED]**Address 2:****City:** huntington beach**State :** CALIFORNIA**ZIP Code** [REDACTED]**Phone:** [REDACTED]**Alt. Phone:** [REDACTED]













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PS Form 3800, April 2015 PSN 7530-02-000-9047

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PS Form 3800, April 2015 PSN 7530-02-000-9047

See Reverse for Instructions

Mark Templin
CEO
Toyota Motor North America
6565 Headquarters Drive
Plano TX 75024-5965

Dear Mr. Templin:

Our beloved Lexus caught on fire on September 26, 2018 due to an engine fire/malfunction while driving my husband to the hospital for his regular doctor visit.

We are an elderly couple on a fixed income and were not planning on buying another car since we are a husband and wife team in our [REDACTED]s. We only ever really need a car to go to the doctor occasionally or to stop at a nearby store.

We purchased our Lexus after we did our research and found that it's supposed to be a very reliable car based on reviews from other owners. Yet, we barely made it out alive from this incident as you know from the report.

Following our ordeal, we sent a letter to Troy H. Higa, Claims Analyst on January 16, 2019 and never received any response. We then tried to call him on xx without much luck. Our letter was in response to his letter in which he stated that "In response [to the engine fire], Toyota Motor North America, Inc ("TMNA")'s engaged an independent fire inspector to perform a thorough inspection of your vehicle. The inspector found that due to the extent of the damage, a specific cause of the fire could not be determined. The fire appeared to have started in the rear of the engine compartment. There was no evidence of any defects in this area."

Imagine our surprise when we the received a letter from AAA on February 21, 2019, which we are also attaching, that they have been storing the car since October 12, 2018 and were never contacted either by anyone including Lexus!!

Lexus or Toyota has never addressed the fact that there was a recall on this vehicle and we were never informed even though we did all the paperwork correctly. If there was a fire that can't be sourced (per your inspection), it still doesn't mean the engine was ok. Healthy engines don't catch on fire!

We are asking for your help. Yes, the insurance company paid for the value of the car but we cannot purchase anything reliable with the amount granted.

We are asking Toyota to help us buy a reliable used, car for a price we can afford with our insurance payout. Given all the facts of this case as well as the reputation of both Lexus and Toyota we are reaching out for some practical advice and retribution. This was a very close call and at this point we are shocked that it seems to be taken so lightly. We were driving on very busy [REDACTED] with five lanes each direction; if drivers around us did not pay attention our situation would be very bleak. How would Toyota and Lexus respond if this incident resulted in a death? Kindly take the appropriate and necessary time to review this case and provide a reasonable resolution instead of ignoring our claims.

We do value your time and trust that this will be looked into further. Especially since no one ever went to actually inspect the car in person!

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]



Model Foreperson #4081390-1000
Model #4081390-1000

Toyota Motor North America, Inc.
10000 Toyota Way
Torrance, CA 90501

December 20, 2018

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Huntington Beach CA [REDACTED]

Re: Date of Loss: September 26, 2018
Vehicle: 2003 Lexus ES 300
VIN: JTHBF30G730 [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for contacting our Customer Experience Center about the fire to your vehicle. You said that you were preparing to leave from your husband's doctor's office parking lot. You tried starting the car, but it would not start. You tried again and it started, but after about 100 yards when you attempted to go after a red light, the vehicle moved very slowly. You tried to move into the turning lane when smoke came up from the front of the car, followed by flames. You were able to stop, and you and your husband were able to exit. The fire department responded to extinguish the fire.

In response, Toyota Motor North America, Inc. ("TMNA")'s engaged an independent fire inspector to perform a thorough inspection of your vehicle.

The inspector found that due to the extent of damage, a specific cause of the fire could not be determined. The fire appeared to have started at the rear of the engine compartment. There was no evidence of any defects in this area.

At the time of the fire your vehicle was 15 years old with a reported 90,284 miles and well out of the warranty period. We understand that you also reported this to Auto Club, your personal automobile insurance carrier. If their investigation has revealed any evidence of product liability, we will gladly review that information.

We were very sorry to learn of this unfortunate incident and appreciate the opportunity address your concerns.

Sincerely,

Troy H. Higa
Claims Analyst









