



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

RL-11483617-1000

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE.
Washington, DC 20590

December 5, 2022

The Honorable Neal Dunn
Member, U.S. House of Representatives
300 South Adams Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

NEF-109 rrr
Ref. No. 11483617

Dear Representative Dunn:

Thank you for the letter on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED], concerning her model year (MY) 2017 Kia Sportage vehicle. Your letter was forwarded to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA). I am pleased to respond.

NHTSA is the Federal agency responsible for improving safety on our Nation's motorways. We are authorized to order manufacturers to recall and repair vehicles or motor vehicle equipment when our investigations indicate that they contain safety defects, such as in their design, construction, or performance. Among other activities, we also monitor the completion rates and adequacy of manufacturers' recall campaigns.

We appreciate the report you provided. Reports from motorists are a very important source of information for us. We express our sincere sympathy to [REDACTED] and hope that she has been able to repair her home from damage caused by Hurricane Michael.

While researching [REDACTED] problem, we identified an incomplete safety recall for her vehicle: NHTSA Safety Recall Campaign No. 21V-137 (enclosed). This recall addresses a problem with the electrical circuit in the Hydraulic Electronic Control Unit (HECU) in certain MY 2017 through MY 2021 Kia Sportage vehicles. The HECU may short-circuit, which can cause a fire in the engine compartment.

We recommend that [REDACTED] contact Kia to discuss how to obtain the free repair for NHTSA Safety Recall Campaign No. 21V-137, given the circumstance of her MY 2017 Kia Sportage, which has experienced engine failure.

Our research did not identify a safety recall for the type of engine failure that [REDACTED] experienced. We believe the issue that she described is most likely a Kia Product Improvement Campaign (Bulletin No. PI1802, enclosed). This campaign covers several Kia and Hyundai models, including [REDACTED] MY 2017 Kia Sportage. Kia sent several notifications for this campaign to affected owners beginning in November 2018 (sample attached).

According to information disseminated by Kia, Product Improvement Campaign PI1802 instructs dealers to install a Knock Sensor Detection System (KSDS) that detects vibrations indicating the onset of excessive connecting rod bearing wear in the engine. The KSDS is designed to alert a vehicle driver at an early stage of bearing wear before the occurrence of severe engine damage including engine failure. Upon completion of this installation, Kia also provides lifetime warranty coverage in certain circumstances to both new and used vehicle owners for engine long block assembly repairs needed due to excessive connecting rod bearing damage.

Please note that the product improvement campaign at issue was initiated by Kia and is not a safety recall. The issuance of a product improvement campaign and extended warranty by a manufacturer does not necessarily mean that a vehicle contains a safety-related defect under our statute, the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act. Manufacturers may issue these types of actions at their discretion to address a known problem unrelated to motor vehicle safety. NHTSA continuously monitors manufacturers' voluntary actions to identify any that may involve safety issues for which a recall is necessary. However, NHTSA does not otherwise regulate a manufacturer's service campaigns and warranty enhancement programs. Thus, the manufacturer remains responsible for all aspects of such programs, including the nature and scope of the repair, the vehicles and MYs at issue, and all associated campaign timing and owner notifications.

Although the issue [REDACTED] experienced currently is not covered by a safety recall, we have entered her report into our complaint database. Our staff will review the complaint in conjunction with other relevant data to determine if a safety-related trend exists that may require our attention.

We encourage [REDACTED] to continue to work with Kia and her local dealer to explore the potential for an amicable resolution to address her engine problem. She may consider requesting, through her dealership, a meeting with a Kia district manager.

[REDACTED] may also consider contacting her local Consumer Protection Agency or the Florida Attorney General's Office regarding her engine problem and any rights under State law. As you know, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) regulates and investigates unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent practices in the marketplace. If [REDACTED] believes this issue potentially relates to such a practice, she may contact the FTC to discuss the matter. There are three ways to contact the FTC: by toll free telephone at 877-382-4357; by mail at Federal Trade Commission, CRC-240, Washington, DC 20580; and by using the Internet complaint form at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov.

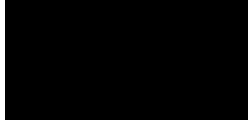
Finally, [REDACTED] may also consider contacting the Better Business Bureau (BBB) Auto Line. The BBB offers free mediation/arbitration to resolve warranty disputes under guidelines

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The Honorable Neal Dunn

established by the FTC. Remedies include repair, reimbursement, repurchase, or replacement, depending on program eligibility. [REDACTED] can visit their website at www.bbb.org to file a complaint and review eligibility information or call the BBB Auto Line at 800-955-5100.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at ron.thaniel@dot.gov.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Ron Thaniel.

Ron Thaniel
Director, Governmental and External Affairs
Office of Governmental Affairs, Policy, and
Strategic Planning

Enclosures

United States Department of Transportation

 Search

[REPORT A SAFETY PROBLEM](#)

Language: **English**

Safety Issues & **Recalls**

Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)

Every vehicle has a unique VIN. Enter a VIN to learn if a specific vehicle needs to be repaired as part of a recall.

KNDPM3ACXH7 [REDACTED]

17/17 

Looking for more information on this vehicle?

NHTSA offers more safety information based on a vehicle's year, make and model. Check safety ratings, recommended technologies and other safety issues.

[Learn More](#) →

2017

Kia SPORTAGE LX FWD AUTO



©EVIX IMAGES

VIN: KNDPM3ACXH7 [REDACTED]

Recall data refreshed on Oct 19,2022

1 Unrepaired Recalls

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associated with this VIN

URGENT: FIRE RISK WHEN PARKED

An urgent safety recall has been issued for this vehicle and the manufacturer has recommended **that you follow their instructions on how and where to park this vehicle**

More information is available under

- [NHTSA Recall Number 21V137000](#).

Mar 04,2021

Manufacturer Recall Number SC206A

NHTSA Recall Number 21V137

Recall Status **Recall Incomplete**

Summary

KIA MOTORS AMERICA, INC., PURSUANT TO THE NATIONAL TRAFFIC AND MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY ACT, IS CONDUCTING A SAFETY RECALL CAMPAIGN TO REPLACE CERTAIN FUSES IN THE ELECTRICAL JUNCTION BOX TO PREVENT AN OVER-CURRENT CONDITION IN THE HECU'S ELECTRICAL CIRCUIT ON ALL 2017-2021 MY SPORTAGE VEHICLES MANUFACTURED FROM DECEMBER 10, 2015 THROUGH OCTOBER 23, 2020 NOT EQUIPPED WITH SMART CRUISE CONTROL (SCC). AN ENGINE COMPARTMENT FIRE MAY OCCUR IN THE AREA WHERE THE HYDRAULIC ELECTRONIC CONTROL UNIT (HECU) IS LOCATED.

Safety Risk

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THE ELECTRICAL CIRCUIT WITHIN THE HECU MAY EXPERIENCE A SHORT CIRCUIT CONDITION THAT RESULTS IN EXCESSIVE CURRENT, THEREBY INCREASING THE RISK OF AN ENGINE COMPARTMENT FIRE. THE EXACT CAUSE OF THE ELECTRICAL SHORT CIRCUIT CONDITION WITHIN THE HECU IS UNKNOWN.

Remedy

FOR THE AFFECTED SPORTAGE VEHICLES, DEALERS ARE TO INSTALL TWO 30A FUSES INSTEAD OF 40-AMPS IF NOT EQUIPPED WITH THE ELECTRONIC PARKING BRAKE (EPB), OR TWO 25A FUSES INSTEAD OF 40-AMPS IF EQUIPPED WITH EPB. IN ADDITION, FOR EPB EQUIPPED SPORTAGE VEHICLES, DEALERS ARE ALSO TO UPDATE THE HECU SOFTWARE WITH A NEWER VERSION. KIA WILL PERFORM THE RECALL REPAIR AT NO COST TO THE CUSTOMER. (REFER TO SC206A.)

"

Manufacturer's Notes

"SC206A

If the manufacturer has failed or is unable to remedy this safety recall for your vehicle in a timely manner, please contact the NHTSA Vehicle Safety Hotline at: 1-888-327-4236 or TTY: 1-800-424-9153 or file an online complaint with NHTSA.

Where's my VIN?

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Look on the lower left of your car's windshield for your 17-character Vehicle Identification Number. Your VIN is also located on your car's registration card, and it may be shown on your insurance card.



What this VIN search tool will show

- An unrepaired vehicle affected by a vehicle safety recall in the past 15 calendar years
- Vehicle safety recalls from [major light auto automakers](#), [motorcycle manufacturers](#) and [some medium/heavy truck manufacturers](#)

What this VIN search tool will not show

- A vehicle with a repaired safety recall. If your vehicle has no unrepaired recalls, you will see the message: "0 Unrepaired recalls associated with this VIN"
- Manufacturer customer service or other nonsafety recall campaign
- International vehicles
- There may be a delay with very recently announced safety recalls for which not all VINs have been identified. VINs are added continuously so please check regularly.
- Safety recalls that are more than 15 years old (except where a manufacturer offers more coverage)
- Safety recalls conducted by small vehicle manufacturers, including some ultra-luxury brands and specialty applications

Get Recall Alerts

Download NHTSA's free SaferCar app.

When SaferCar discovers a safety recall for the vehicle or equipment you entered, it will send you an alert on your phone.

You can also sign up for general recall alerts via email.

SAFERCAR FOR IOS

SAFERCAR FOR ANDROID

EMAIL

Report a Safety Problem by filing a complaint with NHTSA

Have you experienced a vehicle, tire, car seat, or equipment safety problem that could be a safety defect?

If so, you can file a complaint that we will carefully review – like we do with every safety problem submitted to NHTSA.

Complaints like yours help us investigate possible defects, which could lead to a safety recall.

[Report a Safety Problem →](#)

From complaints **to recall**

NHTSA issues vehicle safety standards and requires manufacturers to recall vehicles and equipment that have safety-related defects.

[Learn about NHTSA's recall process.](#)

01 Complaints

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Reporting your problem is the important first step.

Your complaint will be added to a public NHTSA database after personally identifying information is removed.

If the agency receives similar reports from a number of people about the same product, this could indicate that a safety-related defect may exist that would warrant the opening of an investigation.

02 Investigations

NHTSA conducts an investigation from reported complaints.

A. SCREENING

NHTSA reviews filed complaints from vehicle owners and other information related to alleged defects to decide whether to open an investigation.

B. ANALYSIS

NHTSA conducts an analysis of any petitions calling for defect investigations. If the petition is denied, the reasons for the denial are published in the Federal Register.

C. INVESTIGATION

NHTSA opens an investigation of alleged safety defects. It is closed when they notify the manufacturer of recall recommendations they don't identify a safety-related defect.

D. RECALL MANAGEMENT

NHTSA monitors the effectiveness and management of recalls, including the filing of recall notices with NHTSA, communicating with owners regarding the recalls and tracking the completion rate of each recall.

03 Recalls

Initiated safety recalls require a manufacturer's action to announce and remedy the defects.

A recall is issued when a manufacturer or NHTSA determines that a vehicle, equipment, car seat, or tire creates an unreasonable safety risk or fails to meet minimum safety standards. Most decisions to conduct a recall and remedy a safety defect are made voluntarily by manufacturers prior to any involvement by NHTSA.

Manufacturers are required to fix the problem by repairing it, replacing it, offering a refund, or in rare cases repurchasing the vehicle.

Using our VIN lookup tool, you can access recall information provided by the manufacturer conducting the recall which may be not posted yet on NHTSA's site.

[Go to search by VIN →](#)

Recall Spotlight

Recalls Spotlight monitors high-profile recalls and offers consumers resources to find and address vehicle recalls.

[Tens of millions of vehicles with Takata air bags under recall. →](#)

Defects Investigation and Recalls Resources

Quick links to databases, resources and reports related to defects investigations and recalls.

RESOURCES

Roles in the Recall Process



Manufacturer

Manufacturers will notify registered owners by first class mail within 60 days of notifying NHTSA of a recall decision. Manufacture should offer a proper remedy to the owner.



NHTSA

NHTSA will monitor each safety recall to make sure owners receive safe, free, and effective remedies from manufacturers according to the Safety Act and Federal regulations.



You (owner)

You'll be notified via mail from the manufacturer. When you receive a notification, follow any interim safety guidance provided by the manufacturer and contact your local dealership to fix the recalled part for free.

Tips For Your Safety

Register your vehicle, tires, car seats & equipment and check recalls twice a year.

Motor Vehicle Safety Defects And Recalls - What Every Vehicle Owner Should Know

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Download this brochure to get more information about how and why recall campaigns are initiated, and to know your rights and responsibilities when a vehicle or item of motor vehicle equipment is recalled.

[VIEW BROCHURE](#)

NHTSA Information ▾

Information For ▾

NHTSA Sites ▾

Website Information ▾

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

1-888-327-4236

1-800-424-9153 (TTY)



[Submit Feedback >](#)



Kia Motors America, Inc.

Corporate Headquarters

111 Peters Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92606-1790 USA

PRODUCT IMPROVEMENT CAMPAIGN

November 30, 2018

Dear Kia Sportage Owner:

Kia Motors America, Inc. is conducting an important Product Improvement Campaign to perform a software update on all 2016-2018 MY Sportage vehicles equipped with 2.4L Gasoline Direct Injection (“GDI”) and 2.0L Turbocharged GDI (“T-GDI”) engines to protect the engine from excessive connecting rod bearing damage. The update will be done free of charge and will only involve the addition of newly developed computer software for the Engine Control Unit (“ECU”).

Why is Kia Conducting This Product Improvement Campaign?

Kia recently developed a Knock Sensor Detection System (“KSDS”) that detects vibrations indicating the onset of excessive connecting rod bearing wear in the engine. The KSDS is designed to alert a vehicle driver at an early stage of bearing wear before the occurrence of severe engine damage including engine failure.

What Will Kia Do?

- At no cost to you, Kia will perform a software update to the ECU in your vehicle.
- Kia is also providing lifetime warranty coverage to both new and used vehicle owners for engine long block assembly repairs needed due to excessive connecting rod bearing damage upon completion of this Product Improvement Campaign.

What Should You Do?

- Please contact your Kia dealership immediately to have the KSDS software installed on your vehicle and to take advantage of this lifetime warranty on your engine should your engine suffer damage due to excessive connecting rod bearing wear in the future. The estimated time required to update the ECU in your vehicle is approximately one (1) hour, depending on your dealer’s schedule. We recommend that you contact your local Kia dealer to schedule a service appointment by phone or online to minimize inconvenience.
- To find your nearest dealer, visit www.kia.com and click the “Find Dealer” button in the upper right corner (“Dealers” on a mobile device). You can also use the QR code below with your mobile device to access this information (*see the bottom of this letter for more information about QR code use*):



IMPORTANT

Continue to follow the maintenance schedule outlined in Section 7 (Maintenance) of your vehicle’s Owner’s Manual. Keep copies of your receipts/repair orders to show compliance with the vehicle’s maintenance schedule.

- Place this letter in your vehicle’s glove compartment, preferably together with your vehicle’s other warranty information. When seeking service, refer this letter to your servicing dealer. If you sell your vehicle, ensure that you include this letter with the documents you provide to the buyer.

What Will Happen Once The Knock Sensor Detection System Software Update Has Been Completed?

If excessive bearing wear is detected after the KSDS software update has been completed, the following will occur:

QR Code Use:

- A QR Code is a square, 2-dimensional barcode that can be read by mobile devices loaded with an appropriate barcode or **QR Code Reader App**. The app reads the barcode image and then launches/uploads the specific information the code contains, such as URLs, text, photos, videos.
- With a mobile device, **download a QR Code Reader App**. With many devices, you can do this through an app store or marketplace.
- **Open the QR Code Reader App on your mobile device. The app will utilize your device's camera.** Center the code in the camera viewing area. With some apps, the URL or other information will automatically load when the code is recognized. For others, you may have to snap or take a picture of the QR code. **Refer to the QR Reader Code App Instructions.**

Consumer Affairs Department

Sincerely,

Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience this matter may cause you.

- Should you have any questions regarding this Product Improvement Campaign or your dealer does not respond to your service request in a timely manner, we suggest that you contact Kia's Consumer Assistance Center at 1-800-333-4542 (Monday through Friday, 5AM to 6PM, Pacific Standard Time), or through the owner's section of www.kia.com.

What If You Have Other Questions?

- If you have changed your home address, sold your Kia vehicle, or no longer own your vehicle, please complete the enclosed prepaid "Change of Address/Ownership" card and mail it to us.


Have You Changed Your Address or Sold Your Kia?

WARNING:

- If you ignore the blinking MIL and continue to drive your vehicle in Limp Home Mode for an extended number of miles, your vehicle may eventually experience severe engine damage and stall.
- The Kia service technician will be able to read how long you have driven your vehicle after the KSDS is activated.
- It is important that you understand that an abusive failure to take the vehicle to a Kia dealer after KSDS activation may void the lifetime warranty KMA is providing with completion of this Product Improvement Campaign.

Should the above occur in your vehicle (blinking MIL and Limp Home Mode), contact your dealer immediately to have your vehicle inspected.

2. Your vehicle can continue to be operated for a limited time in Limp Home Mode to permit you to drive the vehicle to a safe location, but it will accelerate slowly and have a reduced maximum speed. Engine RPMs will be limited to approximately 1800-2000 RPM. This means the maximum vehicle speed will be limited to approximately 65mph or less depending on vehicle loading and road conditions.

 Malfunction Indicator Lamp (MIL)

1. The Malfunction Indicator Lamp ("MIL") will blink continuously, and the vehicle will be placed in a reduced power and acceleration mode [referred to as "Limp Home Mode"].