

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

From: [Ambrose, Ann-Marie L](#)
To: [EVOO \(NHTSA\); Robertson, Faithia \(NHTSA\); Lewis, Brenton](#)
Cc: [NHTSA ODI CED; Strasser-King, Marion C](#)
Subject: ODI- 11566798
Date: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 2:17:26 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 22, 2024 6:42 AM
To: Bairnsfather, Jeffrey [KUS] <JBairnsfather@kiausa.com>; Greg [KUS] <GSilvestri@kiausa.com>; Michele [KUS] <mcameron@kiausa.com>; wieferichb@michigan.gov; Steven [KUS] <scenter@kiausa.com>; nhtsa.webmaster@dot.gov; secretarybuttigieg@dot.gov; sophie.shulman@dot.gov; NHTSA Service Desk <nhtsa@mail.us.4me.com>; Falge, Walter [KUS] <WFalge@kiausa.com>; King, Paul [KUS] <pking@kiausa.com>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] - [URGENT] KIA RIO 2023 SAFETY ISSUE (VIN: 3KPA24AD4P[REDACTED]) (NHTSA SAFETY ISSUE ID: 11566798)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Jeff

I just collected my Kia Rio from service at LaFontaine. The steering is worse than before the servicing.

On driving in the freeway I noticed I had to make frequent adjustments to the steering when going straight and there was oversteering (minor tilt of the steering wheel result in exaggerated larger turn of the car). This does not happen when driving at lower speed outside of the freeway.

The car veers to the left when driving with steering wheel straight. Tested in a clear non wet road.

When driving on freeway there are over steering and understeering issues. This was extremely dangerous and I felt extremely unsafe driving the vehicle.

Yours sincerely
[REDACTED]

On Sat, Jan 20, 2024 at 2:02 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

When driving on freeway there are over steering and understeering issues. Extremely dangerous.

On Sat, Jan 20, 2024, 12:48 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi Team

The car veers to the left when driving with steering wheel straight. Tested in a clear non wet road.

Please advise on next step.

On Fri, Jan 19, 2024, 4:57 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi Jeff

I just collected my Kia Rio from service at LaFontaine. On driving in the freeway I noticed I had to make frequent adjustments to the steering when going straight and there was oversteering (minor tilt of the steering wheel result in exaggerated larger turn of the car). This does not happen when driving at lower speed outside of the freeway.

I will monitor this as I am not sure if this was because I was switching between cars and/or that particular stretch of road is slippery. According to the technicians the alignment is back to spec so I will let you know if

this issue persists as I drive the Rio more in the coming days.

Thank you.
Yours sincerely
[REDACTED]

On Thu, Jan 18, 2024 at 5:14 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

Sounds good Jeff. I wanted to convey my appreciation to LaFontaine and your team for assisting me with this issue expeditiously. I plan to do my 5k service in LaFontaine Kia.

Thank you for the note on the potholes. As feedback, I wanted to bring up that sometimes avoiding the potholes is not feasible due to safety, which I am sure you as a fellow driver would experience as well. With reasonable driving the manufacturer should ensure the build and material of the car be durable enough to withstand these road conditions which you also pointed out is common in some parts of the states. If due to poor quality the car parts were damaged/misaligned while travelling through normal expected road conditions, I think it is only fair that Kia honor the warranty as well. If not, the purpose of the warranty is lost.

Yours sincerely
[REDACTED]

On Thu, Jan 18, 2024, 4:08 PM Bairnsfather, Jeffrey [KUS] <JBairnsfather@kiausa.com> wrote:

Hello [REDACTED], The dealership is currently working on your vehicle. I have traveled to the dealership to personally inspect your vehicle. The Dealership team will contact you and provide you with an explanation of work that was performed. If not today, they will have it finished tomorrow and outreach to you at that time. Please understand, the dealer will not be contacting the Cc's you have attached to your emails; but will work within the normal dealership protocols. Once completed, they will return the unit to you and I will recommend you test drive the unit with them. Should you have any issues, please keep in mind your vehicle has the 5/60 Base Warranty and 10/100 Powertrain warranty that applies for any manufacturer issue. Naturally, maintenance is not covered by warranty. You mentioned 'your mechanic contact' in a prior email. So, presumably, you may be using your mechanic for your maintenance, which is fine. Your recommended service needs and intervals will all be outlined in your owner's manual detailing all the proper steps. Please do keep in mind of course that the KIA Dealership in Ypsilanti will always be available to you for Warranty or maintenance as well; all with trained, certified KIA technicians. Should you have any concerns that you feel need attention beyond the dealership, we invite you to contact our consumer affairs department.

They can be contacted at: **800-333-4KIA(4542)** Monday – Friday: 5:00 AM to 6:00 PM PST, Saturday – Sunday: Closed / US Public Holidays: Closed.

Your case number for this concern is: [REDACTED] which you can reference if needed.

We anticipate your vehicle will be completed shortly and the dealership will update you. It's been a pleasure to communicate with you. Please take note though that should you have future concerns, the number above is the appropriate avenue for correspondence to KIA for any non-routine issues that a dealer is unable to address. They do not schedule appointments or arrange services on your behalf of course, for that you can contact the dealership directly. Also, you are welcome at any KIA dealership. Feel free to communicate as you need, but any future replies will be directed just to you and/or the KIA consumer affairs department if needed. I won't be replying to all the Ccs you included, but included here are the correct personnel to receive the copies. I will follow up with the dealership tomorrow; at this point I am turning you over to the very capable dealership you are working with. I believe you have the contact information for the dealer; but if not, please let me know and I will certainly get you those appropriate contacts. Lastly, your owners manual and warranty guide are comprehensive sources for understanding your warranty and your maintenance. Michigan roads in winter, along with the myriad construction projects can lead to a lot of potholes. I wish you safety and hope you can avoid those potholes that notably open up in the springtime. As alignments and damage caused by impacts with them are not a warrantable circumstance; I'm mentioning as cautionary so that your enjoyment of the vehicle will not be impeded.

Thank you, have a great day and a successful re-unite with your KIA RIO.
Jeff

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2024 12:43 PM

To: Bairnsfather, Jeffrey [KUS] <JBairnsfather@Kiausa.com>; Falge, Walter [KUS] <WFalge@Kiausa.com>; Silvestri, Greg [KUS] <GSilvestri@Kiausa.com>; Cameron, Michele [KUS] <MCameron@Kiausa.com>; wieferichb@michigan.gov; Center, Steven [KUS] <SCenter@Kiausa.com>; nhtsa.webmaster@dot.gov; secretarybuttigieg@dot.gov; NHTSA Service Desk <nhtsa@mail.us.4me.com>

Subject: Re: [URGENT] KIA RIO 2023 SAFETY ISSUE (VIN: 3KPA24AD4P[REDACTED])

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Hi Jeff

Did LaFontaine Kia update you if the servicing was done?

Thank you.

On Wed, Jan 17, 2024, 6:03 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi Jeff

I brought it to LaFontaine to service this afternoon and received a loaner Kia Rio.

The left rear passenger window is covered entirely by the sticker price paper (specs, MSRP etc). I asked if I could tear it down but the staff said it cannot be torn down as it is policy to leave it up. This is very unsafe as I cannot check my blindspot when filtering to the left. Can you give permission to remove the sticker paper stuck on the left rear passenger window?

Yours sincerely
[REDACTED]

On Wed, Jan 17, 2024 at 6:00 PM Bairnsfather, Jeffrey [KUS] <JBairnsfather@kiausa.com> wrote:

Hello [REDACTED] I'll have a chance to check for you tomorrow; I'll have a chance to follow up with you by the early afternoon. Thank you, Jeff.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2024 8:13:14 AM

To: Bairnsfather, Jeffrey [KUS] <JBairnsfather@Kiausa.com>

Cc: Falge, Walter [KUS] <WFalge@Kiausa.com>; Silvestri, Greg [KUS] <GSilvestri@Kiausa.com>; Cameron, Michele [KUS] <MCameron@Kiausa.com>; wieferichb@michigan.gov <wieferichb@michigan.gov>; Center, Steven [KUS] <SCenter@Kiausa.com>; nhtsa.webmaster@dot.gov <nhtsa.webmaster@dot.gov>; secretarybuttigieg@dot.gov <secretarybuttigieg@dot.gov>; NHTSA Service Desk <nhtsa@mail.us.4me.com>

Subject: Re: [URGENT] KIA RIO 2023 SAFETY ISSUE (VIN: 3KPA24AD4P[REDACTED])

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Thanks Jeff. Is the control arm ready to be installed? Haven't received a call from LaFontaine yet.

Yours sincerely
[REDACTED]

On Fri, Jan 12, 2024 at 2:50 PM Bairnsfather, Jeffrey [KUS] <JBairnsfather@kiausa.com> wrote:

Thank you [REDACTED]. No, the entire suspension does not need to be replaced. The control arm is a component of the suspension system; and that part of the suspension will be changed. Once completed, an alignment will be done as well. Were we to find any issues from a manufacturing defect, your warranty would apply. In this case, whether caused by a manufacturing defect, a shipping issue, or if having simply been caused by hitting a pot hole in the road, we'll take care of this issue, at the very least, as a goodwill gesture.

Thank you,

Jeff

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 12, 2024 2:42 PM
To: Bairnsfather, Jeffrey [KUS] <JBairnsfather@Kiausa.com>
Cc: Falge, Walter [KUS] <WFalge@Kiausa.com>; Silvestri, Greg [KUS] <GSilvestri@Kiausa.com>; Cameron, Michele [KUS] <MCameron@Kiausa.com>; wieferichb@michigan.gov; Center, Steven [KUS] <SCenter@Kiausa.com>; nhtsa.webmaster@dot.gov; secretarybuttigieg@dot.gov; NHTSA Service Desk <nhtsa@mail.us.4me.com>
Subject: Re: [URGENT] KIA RIO 2023 SAFETY ISSUE (VIN: 3KPA24AD4PE [REDACTED])

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The manager said the whole suspension has to be changed, can't just change the arm itself.

Was it the arm that will be changed or was it the suspension?

Anyway, I hope we get a working condition Rio ASAP.

On Fri, Jan 12, 2024, 2:36 PM Bairnsfather, Jeffrey [KUS] <JBairnsfather@kiausa.com> wrote:

Hello [REDACTED] and thank you for your message. I have already communicated with the Service Manager on the condition. I am glad they were able to get you in right away. I understand however that you elected to forgo the loaner car available to you and have taken possession of your vehicle. The Control Arm is on order (expedited) and once it arrives, the dealer will contact you and execute the installation of the part. The dealer will take photos and KIA will examine the part in question. So, indeed, we're happy to expedite the resolution. Of course, KIA's industry leading 5/60 base warranty and 10/100 powertrain warranty are there for your peace of mind and when you are ready to have this repair completed; you'll have a loaner available if you wish to take advantage.

Thank you, have a great weekend,

Jeff

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 12, 2024 2:18 PM
To: Bairnsfather, Jeffrey [KUS] <JBairnsfather@Kiausa.com>; Silvestri, Greg [KUS] <GSilvestri@Kiausa.com>; Cameron, Michele [KUS] <MCameron@Kiausa.com>; wieferichb@michigan.gov; Center, Steven [KUS] <SCenter@Kiausa.com>; nhtsa.webmaster@dot.gov; secretarybuttigieg@dot.gov; NHTSA Service Desk <nhtsa@mail.us.4me.com>
Cc: Falge, Walter [KUS] <WFalge@Kiausa.com>
Subject: [URGENT] KIA RIO 2023 SAFETY ISSUE (VIN: 3KPA24AD4PE [REDACTED])

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Hi Jeff

LaFontaine Kia said the front control arm was bent causing the steering issue. They said they will give me a call Monday because they need to discuss with a "Kia rep" regarding this issue.

Could you help expedite the resolution for this please?

Also, my mechanic contact told me Hyundai/Kia frequently get this issue even for new cars. They didn't take care of the car when shipping so bars got bent. Usually cars when shipping, there will be workers driving the car into the containers and these workers were not careful and damaged them.

This seems like a quality issue from day one so I hope a speedy resolution could be made to avoid safety issues and loss of time from maintenance.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

██████████

On Fri, Jan 5, 2024 at 3:15 PM ██████████ > wrote:

Thanks Jeff. I kept to my original Appt of Jan 12, 1pm. Hopefully all goes well. Will keep you posted. Really appreciate you guys helping to get my Rio taken care of.

On Fri, Jan 5, 2024, 1:49 PM Bairnsfather, Jeffrey [KUS] <JBairnsfather@kiausa.com> wrote:

Good afternoon ██████████ I understand you are all set with for 3pm on Friday, the 12th. A loaner will be available for you as well; this will afford the option of providing time as needed by the dealer to ensure a complete inspection is conducted and providing you with alternate transportation. Service Manager Harpreet Singh is taking good care of the situation. Thank you very much, Have a great weekend. Jeff

From: ██████████
Sent: Friday, January 5, 2024 11:07 AM
To: Falge, Walter [KUS] <WFalge@Kiausa.com>
Cc: Bairnsfather, Jeffrey [KUS] <JBairnsfather@Kiausa.com>
Subject: Re: Kia Rio

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Hi Walter

LaFontaine Kia Ypsilanti called me to schedule an appointment just now.

Could you let LaFontaine Kia Ypsilanti know if I could reschedule the appointment to a later time like 3pm on the same day (Jan 12 2024)

Thanks

On Thu, Jan 4, 2024, 5:51 PM [REDACTED] > wrote:

Good evening Walter, thank you so much for reaching out and looking into this.

If I miss the call at [REDACTED] they can send me an email at this email address.

Thank you.

On Thu, Jan 4, 2024, 5:50 PM Falge, Walter [KUS] <WFalge@kiausa.com> wrote:

[REDACTED]

Good evening. I received your contact information from Greg Silvestri at our National office.

I am the Regional Manager responsible for the Detroit area and have copied our District Parts & Service Manager, Jeff Bairnsfather.

Jeff has been in contact with LaFontaine Kia of Ypsilanti, and they will be reaching out to your tomorrow morning to make Service arrangements for your Rio.

Should you have any direct questions, Jeff will be working with the dealership. Sorry for your troubles.

Thank you,

Walter Falge | Regional Parts & Service Manager, Central Region

Kia America, Inc.

3500 Lacey Road, Suite 350, Downer Grove, IL 60515

Office: (630)785-9244 Mobile: (312) 485-1878 Email: wfalge@kiausa.com

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From: [Ambrose, Ann-Marie L](#)
To: [EVOO \(NHTSA\)](#); [Robertson, Faithia \(NHTSA\)](#); [Lewis, Brenton](#)
Cc: [NHTSA ODI CED](#); [Strasser-King, Marion C](#)
Subject: ODI-11566798
Date: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 2:25:13 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 22, 2024 7:17 AM
To: Paige Weatherly <pweatherly@lafontaine.com>; serviceappointments@lafontaine.com; Bairnsfather, Jeffrey [KUS] <JBairnsfather@kiausa.com>; Greg [KUS] <GSilvestri@kiausa.com>; Michele [KUS] <mcameron@kiausa.com>; wieferichb@michigan.gov; Steven [KUS] <scenter@kiausa.com>; nhtsa.webmaster@dot.gov; sophie.shulman@dot.gov; NHTSA Service Desk <nhtsa@mail.us.4me.com>; Falge, Walter [KUS] <WFalge@kiausa.com>; King, Paul [KUS] <pking@kiausa.com>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] - [URGENT] KIA RIO 2023 SAFETY ISSUE (VIN: 3KPA24AD4PE[REDACTED]) (NHTSA SAFETY ISSUE ID: 11566798)

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Hi Paige

I just collected my Kia Rio last Friday Feb 19 from service at LaFontaine. The steering is worse than before the servicing.

On driving in the freeway I noticed I had to make frequent adjustments to the steering when going straight and there was oversteering (minor tilt of the steering wheel result in exaggerated larger turn of the car). This does not happen when driving at lower speed outside of the freeway.

The car veers to the left when driving with steering wheel straight. Tested in a clear non wet road.

When driving on freeway there are over steering and understeering issues. This was extremely dangerous and I felt extremely unsafe driving the vehicle.

Can I bring the vehicle in for you this afternoon to rectify this and ensure the issue is really resolved (including a drive through on road and freeway before returning it to me) and I get a loaner car again?

Yours sincerely
[REDACTED]

On Fri, Jan 5, 2024 at 11:46 AM Paige Weatherly <pweatherly@lafontaine.com> wrote:

Yes sir. You are all set.

Paige Weatherly
Business Development Team Lead
LaFontaine Automotive Group
248-313-5323
pweatherly@lafontaine.com
www.FamilyDeal.com

OUR MISSION:

To build life long relationships that connect families, strengthen communities and personalize the automotive experience!



From [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, January 5, 2024 11:46 AM
To: Paige Weatherly <pweatherly@lafontaine.com>
Subject: Re: Your Appointment Confirmation

Sounds good. Is 1/12 Friday 1pm confirmed?

On Fri, Jan 5, 2024, 11:44 AM Paige Weatherly <pweatherly@lafontaine.com> wrote:

I'm not sure how long it would be unfortunately. I know typically it's around that time but it all depends on how the flow of the shop is when you come in.

So to be on the safe side, we'd still have one available. You'd be able to speak to the advisor about how long it would be for the service to be completed.

Paige Weatherly
Business Development Team Lead
LaFontaine Automotive Group
248-313-5323
pweatherly@lafontaine.com
www.FamilyDeal.com

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Error! Filename not specified.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 5, 2024 11:43 AM
To: Paige Weatherly <pweatherly@lafontaine.com>
Subject: Re: Your Appointment Confirmation

Actually, Friday 1/12 1pm works fine.

How long does the service take? The previous time I did the wheel alignment at summitt place kia auburn hills it was done in an hour or so.

Is there a need for loaner car?

Thanks.

On Fri, Jan 5, 2024, 11:39 AM Paige Weatherly <pweatherly@lafontaine.com> wrote:

I do apologize. I just spoke to them and we would have to keep Friday 1/12 but I am able to put you in for 3:15pm.

He also wanted me to let you know they would have a vehicle that day for you to take.

Does Friday at 3:15pm work okay for you?

Paige Weatherly
Business Development Team Lead
LaFontaine Automotive Group
248-313-5323
pweatherly@lafontaine.com
www.FamilyDeal.com

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 5, 2024 11:34 AM
To: Paige Weatherly <pweatherly@lafontaine.com>
Subject: Re: Your Appointment Confirmation

I wanted to confirm you have confirmed the schedule with the service staff because when the service staff

called me just now he said most of next week is full except for Thursday and Friday.
Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

On Fri, Jan 5, 2024 at 11:32 AM [REDACTED] wrote:

Tuesday 1/9 1.15pm is good. Thank you!
Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

On Fri, Jan 5, 2024 at 11:26 AM Paige Weatherly <pweatherly@lafontaine.com> wrote:

Perfect. I can do 1:15pm, 2:45pm, or 3:15pm on Tuesday

Paige Weatherly
Business Development Team Lead
LaFontaine Automotive Group
248-313-5323
pweatherly@lafontaine.com
www.FamilyDeal.com

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 5, 2024 11:23 AM
To: Paige Weatherly <pweatherly@lafontaine.com>
Subject: Re: Your Appointment Confirmation

Tuesday 1/9 afternoon works.
Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

On Fri, Jan 5, 2024 at 11:12 AM Paige Weatherly <pweatherly@lafontaine.com> wrote:

Absolutely. It looks like we have Tuesday 1/9 in the afternoon.

Wednesday 1/10 starting at 8:45am. We do have afternoon that day as well.

Thursday 1/11 starting at 8:15am and open majority of the day.

Does afternoon or morning work best for you?

Paige Weatherly
Business Development Team Lead
LaFontaine Automotive Group
248-313-5323
pweatherly@lafontaine.com
www.FamilyDeal.com

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 5, 2024 11:09 AM
To: Paige Weatherly <pweatherly@lafontaine.com>
Subject: Re: Your Appointment Confirmation

Thank you for the quick reply. May I check what available date and time you have for next week?
Yours sincerely

On Fri, Jan 5, 2024 at 11:07 AM Paige Weatherly <pweatherly@lafontaine.com> wrote:

Good morning,

Unfortunately we do not have any other times available on 1/12. The next day we have a later time would be Monday 1/15 at 3:15pm

Paige Weatherly
Business Development Team Lead
LaFontaine Automotive Group
248-313-5323
pweatherly@lafontaine.com
www.FamilyDeal.com

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 5, 2024 11:05 AM
To: ServiceAppointments <ServiceAppointments@lafontaine.com>
Subject: Re: Your Appointment Confirmation

Hi

May I change to a later time like 3pm on the same date (Jan 12 2024).

On Fri, Jan 5, 2024, 10:39 AM LaFontaine Kia Ypsilanti Service Department
<serviceappointments@lafontainekiaypsilanti.org> wrote:

|

LaFontaine Kia Ypsilanti
serviceappointments@lafontaine.com
(734) 663-7700
444 James L Hart Parkway Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Your Appointment Confirmation

Hello, [REDACTED]

Thank you for scheduling service for your 2023 Kia Rio with us. Your appointment is confirmed.

If this appointment is no longer convenient, please call (833) 780-0541 to reschedule.

Appointment Summary

Appointment Date

1/12/2024

Appointment Time

1:00 PM

Appointment #

[REDACTED]

Service Consultant

Harpreet Singh

We appreciate your business and look forward to seeing you.

Thanks,

LaFontaine Kia Ypsilanti

(833) 780-0541 | serviceappointments@lafontaine.com

444 James L Hart Parkway, MI 48197

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