



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

Auto Safety Hotline

Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire

NATIONWIDE 1-800-424-9393
DC METRO AREA (202) 366-0123
INTERNET: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY

Date Received

RECEIVED

JAN 11 PM

OFFICE
OF SAFETY INVESTIGATION

City or

State

Zip

up to

Reference No.

550364

Day Time Telephone Number

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of this report to the manufacturer of your vehicle? ☐ YES ☐ NO
In the absence of an authorization, NHTSA WILL NOT provide your name and address to the vehicle manufacturer.

Signature of Owner UNAVAILABLE - FILED BY 3rd PARTY Date ____/____/____

VEHICLE INFORMATION

Vehicle Ident. No. (VIN) (Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side) _____ Vehicle Make Kia Vehicle Model Sepia Vehicle Year 1999 Current Odometer Reading _____

Purchase Date _____ Dealer's Name _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Engine Size (CID/CC/L) _____ ☐ Turbo ☐ Diesel ☒ Gas ☐ Fuel Injection
☒ New ☐ Used No. Cylinders _____

Transmission Type ☐ Manual ☐ Automatic Antilock Brakes ☐ Yes ☐ No Restraint System ☒ Driverside Airbag ☐ Motorbelt ☒ Passengerside Airbag ☐ 2-Point Belt ☒ 3-Point Belt Cruise Control ☐ Yes ☐ No Drivetrain ☐ Front ☐ Rear ☐ 4-Wheel Vehicle Type ☒ Car ☐ Sports Ult. ☐ Van ☐ Truck ☐ Minivan ☐ Motorcycle ☐ Other Body Style ☐ 2-Door ☒ 4-Door ☐ Stationwagon ☐ Pick Up Truck ☐ Other

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Component _____ Part Name(s) switchable seat belt retractor Location ☐ Left ☒ Right ☐ Front ☒ Rear Failed Part(s) ☒ Original ☐ Replacement
No. of Failures _____ Date(s) of Failure(s) 12-25-99 Mileage at Failure(s) Low Vehicle Speed at Failure(s) N/A Failed Part(s) Available? ☒ Yes ☐ No NHTSA Previously Contacted? ☐ Yes ☒ No

APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION

(Please describe in detail the incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies) on the back of this form)

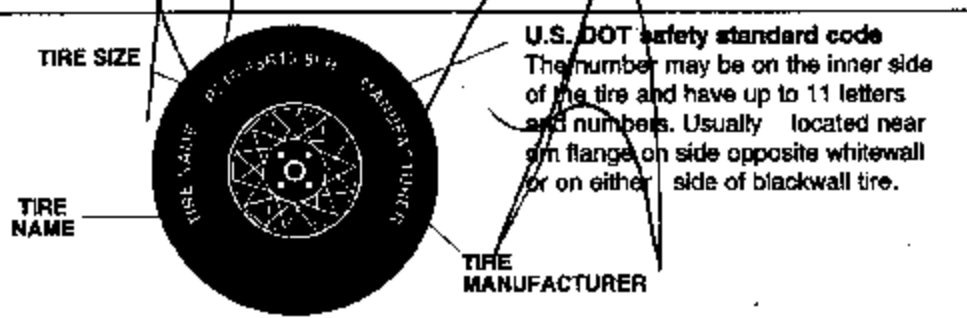
Crash ☐ Yes ☒ No Fire ☐ Yes ☒ No Number Persons Injured 0 Number of Fatalities 0 Estimated Property Damage \$ 0 Reported to Police ☐ Yes ☒ No

INFORMATION ON TIRE FAILURE(S) (IF APPLICABLE)

To report defective or failed tires provide the following: DOT Number, Tire Manufacturer, Tire Name, Tire Size (include all numbers and letters).

Note: This information not required for normal operation tires.

DOT _____ Manufacturer _____ Tire Name _____ Complete Tire Size _____



The Privacy Act of 1974—Public Law 93-579 This information is requested pursuant to authority vested in the National Highway Traffic Safety Act and subsequent amendments. You are under no obligation to respond to this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist the NHTSA in determining whether a manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If the NHTSA proceeds with administrative enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.

Auto Safety Hotline (800) 424-9393

YOUR CALL CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The toll-free Auto Safety Hotline is your chance to help identify safety problems in motor vehicles, tires and automotive equipment such as child safety seats, or get safety information.

The Hotline is run by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

WHAT YOU GET

Operators can send you information on motor vehicle safety recalls including recalls of child safety seats. You'll also receive a postage-paid questionnaire so you can provide more detailed information about your complaint and return it to us. We'll send you a follow-up letter letting you know when your safety concern has prompted a recall.

HOW YOUR CALL HELPS

If a safety-related defect exists, the manufacturer has to fix it at no cost to the owner. We use the information from your calls to get the process started.

HOW TO CALL

The toll-free Hotline number (800) 424-9393 can be reached from anywhere in the United States including Alaska, Hawaii, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

Hotline operators are on duty Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Eastern time. An answering system is set up 24 hours a day, seven days a week to get your name, number and request. Fax-on-demand is also available.

If you're calling from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, the number is (202) 366-0123.

A Spanish-speaking operator is available weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern time.

The Hotline is available to the hearing impaired through a teleprinter (TDD) number: (800) 424-9153. In the Washington, D.C. area the TDD number is (202) 366-7800.

HOW THE RECALL PROCESS WORKS

We don't have to receive a set number of reports before we'll look into a problem. We gather all available information on a problem. That's why your calls are important to us. Government engineers analyze the problem. If warranted, they ask the manufacturer to do a voluntary recall. If the manufacturer doesn't do a recall, the government decides whether to open a formal investigation. If we determine there is a safety defect, we can order the manufacturer to do a recall.



WHY BOTHER?

Your call helps lead to recalls. You provide the first information we use to identify safety problems.

We review your complaint and compare it to other complaints. If a trend develops, it prompts us to open an investigation. We also let the manufacturer know about your complaint and sometimes that leads to a settlement for you.



Auto Safety Hotline (800) 424-9393

You can also request a variety of safety literature from the Auto Safety Hotline. Just indicate on this form the item you are interested in and mail it as directed, or call the Hotline and order the information by mail or fax.

☐ Questionnaire to report a problem

☐ Recalls on _____ Year _____ Make & Model _____

☐ Drunk driving literature

☐ Child safety seat package

☐ Safety belts and air bags

☐ Child safety seat registration form

☐ New car crash test results

☐ Bicycle package

☐ Insurance discount fact sheet

☐ Antilock braking system fact sheet

☐ Odometer fraud

☐ Uniform tire grading report



Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Please detach and mail pre-addressed card. Card must have stamp; Post Office will not deliver without postage. Allow at least two weeks for delivery.

December 13, 1999

Juan Byron, CPS Technician- IO298
545 Moore Road
Woodside, CA 94062
(650) 851-9880 voice/fax

NHTSA Auto Safety Hotline
400 Seventh Lane, SW
Washington, DC 20590

Attached please find a partially completed Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire in which I attempt to report that somebody else's new car has a seatbelt that may not meet the lockability standard for compatibility with child safety seats. The vehicle, a 1999 Kia Sephia, came to my attention at a child safety seat checkup I was conducting on Thanksgiving Day. Unfortunately I failed to get the VIN, purchase date, dealer, etc. I phoned the owner once to get the missing info and she didn't call back.

I attempted to assist the owner* with installing a Century model 4170 convertible (used forward facing) child safety seat (manufactured 10-01-98) and found that the right rear lap/shoulder belt failed to stay "switched" into the automatic locking retractor mode as the Kia vehicle owner's manual directed. The "automatic locking" portion of the belt/retractor system reset about 12" before the child safety seat would have been secured. The seatbelt's "dead space" was so large that I believe it is incompatible with most modern convertible safety seats; the vehicle has no tether anchor spots.

As you are aware, the seatbelt normally has an "emergency locking" retractor but is switched to an "automatic locking" retractor by pulling slowly to its full extension. Seatbelts with this "switchable" retractor reset when most of the unfastened seatbelt is allowed to retract. In checking dozens of 1996 and later vehicles with switchable retractors, I've never seen one with such a large "dead space".

I am concerned because I believe that some users will follow the vehicle owner's manual to switch the retractor (to ALR), then fail to notice that it has reset (to ELR) while installing a convertible safety seat. As you are aware, this would be serious misuse, likely to result in unnecessary injury to both child safety seat occupant and any other occupant who may be hit by the loosely restrained child occupant.

A secondary, perhaps cosmetic flaw, is that the plastic "button" on the seatbelt webbing (intended to keep the sliding latch from sliding into the seat bight between uses) easily broke off when taking the slack out of the lap/shoulder belt while it was threaded through the convertible safety seat frame. Stitching performs better than plastic buttons.)

After I provided the owner with your Tips 1-9, she chose to install her seat rear facing in the center rear with a manual lap belt and buy a higher RF weight limit convertible seat. Please notify Kia of my concern, and provide me with any follow up which is public.

*owner;

Sincer