



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

Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire

NATIONWIDE 1-800-424-9393
DC METRO AREA (202) 365-8123

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY

Date of Report: NOV-3 PM 1:28
Reference No. **551686**

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name: [Redacted]
Street: [Redacted]
City: [Redacted]

Day Time Telephone Number
()

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: [Redacted] Date: 3.14.2000

VEHICLE INFORMATION

Vehicle Ident. No. (VIN)	Location of VIN (on driver's side)	Vehicle Make	Vehicle Model	Vehicle Year	Current Odometer Reading
3VWKA21C3YM40143		Volkswagen	Beetle	2000	
Purchase Date	Dealer's Name	City		State	Zip Code
4/6/10/2000	RDD EAST	SAN ANTONIO		TX	78207
☒ New ☐ Used	Engine Size (CID/GC/L)	☐ Turbo	☐ Diesel	☐ Gas	☐ Fuel Injection
Transmission Type	Antilock Brakes	Hazard System	Cruise Control	Drivetrain	Body Style
☐ Manual ☒ Automatic	☒ Yes ☐ No	☒ Driver's Airbag ☐ Passenger's Airbag ☐ 3-Point Belt	☐ Yes ☒ No	☐ Front ☐ Rear ☐ 4-Wheel	☐ Hatch Back ☐ Van ☐ Pick Up Truck ☐ Other

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Component	Part Name(s)	Location	Failed Part(s)
	Side-impact airbags, both	☒ Left ☐ Right ☐ Front ☐ Rear	☒ Original ☐ Replacement
No. of Failures	Date(s) of Failure(s)	Manufacturer Contacted?	NHTSA Previously Contacted?
1	4 DEC 2000 Mileage at Failure: <u>UNUSUAL: EXCESSIVE BUMPING AND ROLLING</u> Vehicle Speed of Failure(s):	☒ Yes ☐ No	☒ Yes ☐ No

APPLICABLE ACCIDENT INFORMATION

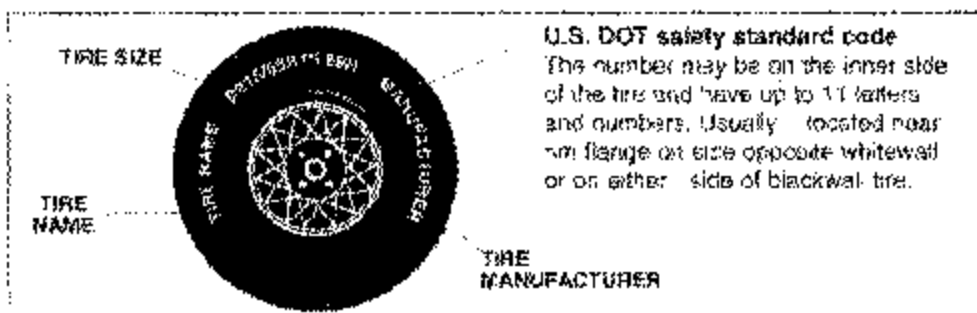
(Use reverse side for more detailed information)

Accident	Fire	Number Persons Injured	Number of Fatalities	Estimated Property Damage	Reported to Police
☒ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☒ No	1	1	\$25,000	☒ 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	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.

Narrative Description of Failure(s), Accident(s), and Injury(ies)

Robert Kern McGary, 53, was travelling at a high rate of speed when he lost control of his brand new Volvo 740. His car spun around on I-49 Hwy 173, originally headed north. It went off the road toward the east, going into a culvert and then up the other side of the culvert, going airborne for some time, crashing through a group of trees. To have done this for the twenty or so feet of damage along the trees, presumably the car had to have made side impact. It then landed in a group of larger trees, smashing all sides of the car and killing Mr. McGary, my father. The side impact airbags DID NOT DEPLOY. Both are located within the right front and left front seats, respectively. Both are intact. We have kept the vehicle at the salvage yard for 3 1/2 months now, awaiting any response. The injuries my father sustained were fatal, many of which are noted in side impact parking test crashes - his legs & arms were broken, his PELVIS was broken & his head ~~was~~ sustained great impact. THE SIDE AIRBAGS SHOULD HAVE DEPLOYED! Even if it wouldn't have saved the driver, it should have opened.

Field to show Return Address (no stamp needed) Fasten with tape or staples and mail.

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

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use \$300

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 73173 WASHINGTON, D.C.

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY NATION. HWY. TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMIN.

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Auto Safety Hotline, NEF-11 HL
400 7th Street, SW.
Washington, DC 20590



NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



Subj: Side-impact airbags and their effectiveness

Date: 01/19/2000

To: leonwade@compuserve.com

This is the letter I sent to news editors and auto safety organizations.

The following concerns a local engineer/inventor killed recently just outside of Austin:

On December 4th, 1999, my father was killed in his brand new 2000 Volkswagen Beetle. These automobiles are heralded for the presence of side-impact airbags, this being one of the most prevalent advertisements for this make and model's safety. The police report states that my father's car was going over 100 miles per hour when it skidded off the road into an embankment, rode up the other side of the embankment, and was airborne, slashing through a row of trees before being crushed within another set of trees. It seems to me as if not only one but several lateral impacts occurred. Nevertheless, the side-impact airbags *did not deploy*.

My father's arms, legs, neck, and pelvis were crushed. The state of his internal organs rendered any chance of survival beyond the final rest of the car impossible, according to police and morgue staff. There is reason to believe that had the airbags deployed, this level of devastation would not have happened.

The front passenger and driver airbags did do as intended, though it was not enough to stop my father from being killed.

When he purchased this new vehicle in August of 1999, one of his main attractions was the long list of safety features about which Volkswagen raves. In fact, when I first attempted to research the topic "airbags side safety," the **NUMBER ONE** site listed was the new 2000 BEETLE.

I made a call to Volkswagen voicing my concern for the safety of other consumers, in addition to my concern for the possibility that my father's life may have been spared. The woman with whom I spoke bluntly brushed me off, explaining that there was no cause for my interest in this matter. She told me that the location of the sensors for the airbags prevented a response in an impact that was not *perpendicular*, basically. I can only assume that this is not the sum of the safety afforded by these side-impact airbags.

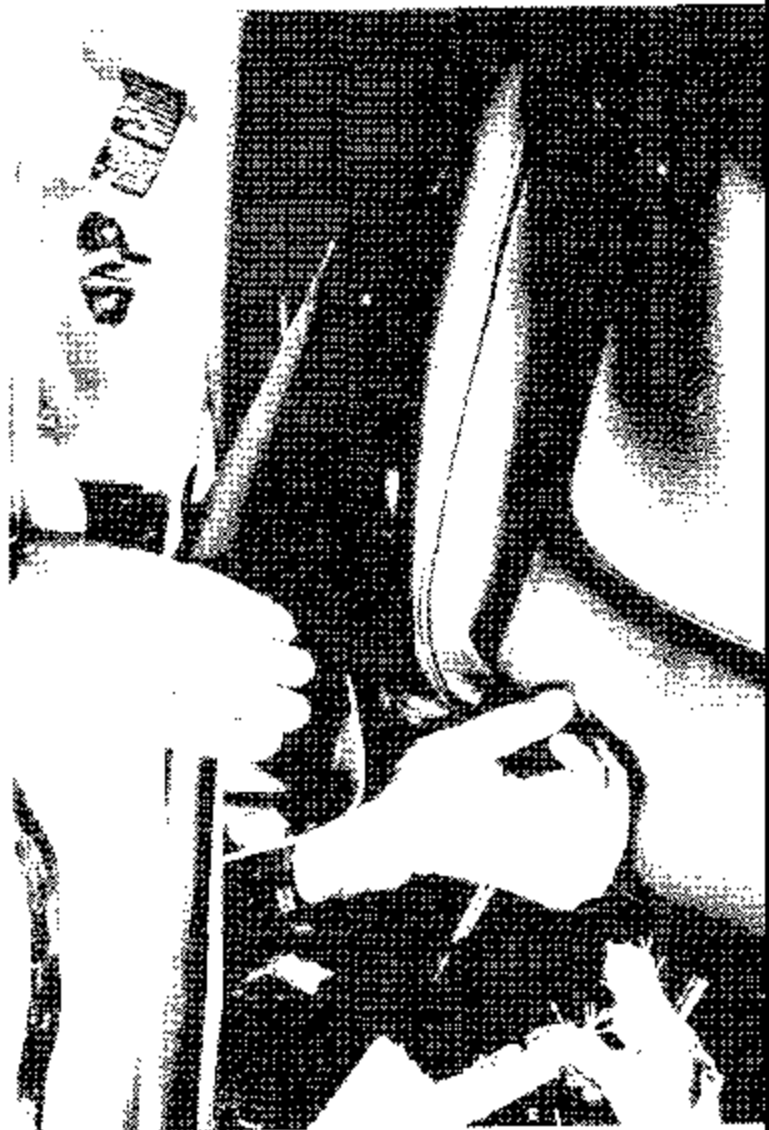
My father's car hit numerous times on both sides, and yet the bags did not deploy.

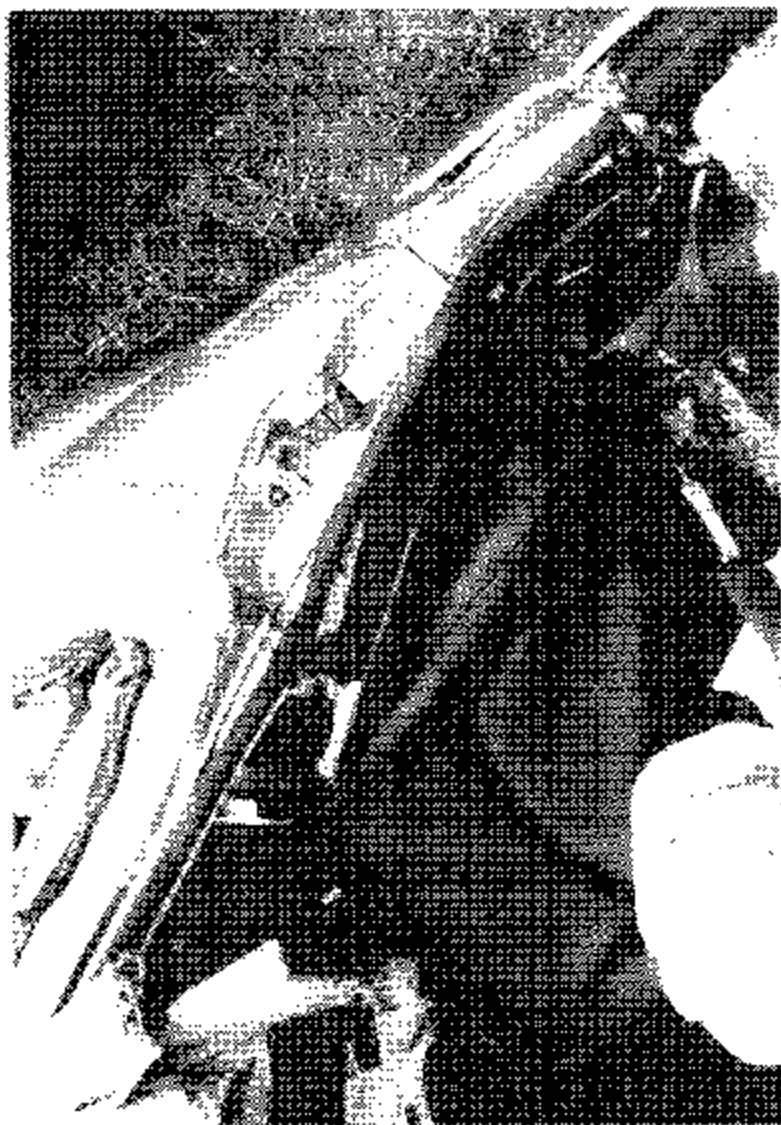
I would like to talk with someone who can explain to me how this is possible, given the amount of attention paid to the fairly newly developed airbags.

I can be reached at 512-260-3925, or via e-mail at RMcGary@aol.com.

My name is Robin McGary May. My father's name was Robert Kem McGary and he was only 53 years old.

Thank you.
R.M.M.





This is a photograph
of the driver's side
seat. The writing on
the frame is informing
readers of the existence
of the side-impact airbags
within the seat. One can
see the bend in the
seat's material where
impact has crushed it
inward + yet no
airbag deployed.

DDIND.
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3-14-2000

Here is the
passenger side
airbag, still within
seat

DDIND
551

This is a photograph
of the salvage yard's
employee pulling the
~~seat~~ ~~of~~ metal frame
away from the seat
so that the word
"AIRBAG" is visible.



3-14-2000

ADDEND.
551686

This is the car.
The driver's side door
was removed and is
placed in front of the
car. The car is
facing forward.



3-14-2000

ADDEND.

551686