



U.S. Department
of Transportation

National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

**DOT Auto Safety Hotline
Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire**
TO REPORT VEHICLE SAFETY DEFECTS
1-888-DA8H-2-DOT
(1-888-327-4238)
INTERNET: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY

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09 OCT 16 PM 12:00

OFFICE
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

Reference No.
556127

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

[Redacted Owner Information]

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 a copy of this report to the vehicle manufacturer.

Signature of Owner

Date 10/10/2000

PRODUCT INFORMATION

Vehicle Identification No. (VIN) (17 Digits) <u>2G4W552U0Y1234534</u>		Make <u>BUICK</u>	Model <u>CENTURY</u>	Year <u>2000</u>
Purchased Date <u>2/21/2000</u>	Dealer's Name <u>RUGALIA STANTON</u>		Engine Size (CID/CC/L) <u>3.1</u>	☐ Turbo ☐ Diesel ☐ Gas ☒ Fuel Injection
☒ New ☐ Used	Dealer's City <u>ASHTABULA</u>	State <u>OHIO</u>	Zip Code <u>44004</u>	No. Cylinders <u>6</u>
Manufacture Date (on driver's door or pillar) <u>01/00</u>	Transmission Type ☐ Manual ☒ Automatic	Restraint System ☒ Driverside Air Bag ☐ Motorbelt ☒ Passengerside Air Bag ☐ 2-Point Belt ☒ 3-Point Belt	Cruise Control ☒ Yes ☐ No	Drivetrain ☐ Front ☐ Rear ☐ 4-Wheel
Vehicle Type ☒ Car ☐ Sport Utility ☐ Van ☐ Truck ☐ Minivan ☐ Motorcycle ☐ Other		Body Style ☐ 2-Door ☒ 4-Door ☐ Stationwagon ☐ Pick Up Truck ☐ Other		

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Part Name(s)	Location ☐ Left ☐ Right ☐ Front ☐ Rear	Failed Part(s) ☐ Original ☐ Replacement	Handicap Adaptive Equip ☐ Yes ☐ No
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TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Brand	Tire Name	Complete Tire Size
No. of Failures	Date(s) of Failure(s) Mileage at Failure(s) Vehicle Speed at Failure(s):	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). Attach photos if available.)

Crash ☐ Yes ☐ No	Fire ☐ Yes ☐ No	Number of Persons Injured	Number of Fatalities	Reported to Manufacturer ☐ Yes ☐ No
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Narrative Description of Incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies).

[Empty space for narrative description]

Continues on back.

The Privacy Act of 1974 - Public Law 93-579 This information is requested pursuant to a49 U.S.C. Chapter 301. You are under no obligation to respond to this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist NHTSA in determining whether a manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If NHTSA proceeds with administration enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.

Mail postage free or fax to 202-366-7882

Earle Kotila

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2000 4:22 PM
Subject: auto safety

U. S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Office of Defects Investigation, NSA-10.01
400 7th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Sir,

Enclosed you will find a letter written to the BBB Auto Line Program, 4200 Wilson Blvd, Suite 830, Arlington, Va. 22230, which explains the problem with the Buick Century, that I have been experiencing during the summer months of the year.

To emphasize more clearly, since my panicking experience that first time, I have asked owners of similar cars, [Buick Century's] to attempt to do what I suggest, that is, drive the car with the back windows open and the front windows closed, so as to see if they would experience the same violent shaking, for want of a better word, that I did, when the car was driven at highway speeds or even less. Without fail, everyone, whether the car was a '97, '98, '99, or as mine, a 2000, experienced the same frightening feelings, so I felt I was not alone. When the salesman agreed with me, and repeated the test on a brand new car on the lot, he suggested I contact the Buick Motor Co. and report the problem. It took three calls before I reached anyone with authority to listen to me, and after he checked several dealerships in Michigan, I believe, he agreed that others had reported the same problem. He asked me to wait until he contacted a supervisor, and the next day told me that it was a design fault and I should live with it.

I do not believe I should have to live with it, barring compensation by the Buick company to readjust my driving to never open the rear windows. I was asked why I did not check the windows out before buying, but who opens their windows in Northern Ohio in February?

As far as accidents caused by the panic of the violent shaking, I have no record of this happening, as could be expected since I do not follow accident reports, and it would be difficult to tie an open window to a smashed car. But I suggest, in fact, I implore you to drive any Buick Century at highway speeds with the back windows open and I will guarantee you the thrill of your life.

With the bad design, and probably no way to fix the problem, I believe Buick should be held responsible and compensate, in some way the owners of the car in question.

Thank you for listening.

[REDACTED]

Earle Kotila

From: [REDACTED]
 To: [REDACTED]
 Sent: Friday, August 25, 2000 2:39 PM
 Subject: Design flaw on Buick Century

BBB Auto Line Program
 4200 Wilson Blvd.
 Suite 800
 Arlington, Virginia 22230

Dear Sir,

On February 21, 2000, my wife and I purchased a new Buick Century from the dealership of Rugala-Stanton Buick Olds, Gmc,
 2824 N. Ridge East
 Ashtabula, Ohio 44004
 Phone, 440 993 2195

About a month ago, while in a neighboring city, I rolled down the back windows so there might be a circulation of air, and also, we could speak to each other without putting up with wind noise. Being in the city, our driving speed was under 30 miles an hour and everything was working well. We had dinner at a local restaurant, and as we went to leave, I noticed that I had left open the rear windows. I left them open and started out of town. As we reached the rural areas, all of a sudden, a tremendous vibration began in the back. We both panicked, but I remembered the windows and pushed the buttons to close them. That stopped the vibration, so we continued on until we reached the freeway, Rt. 11. My wife suggested that we try opening the windows again in case the problem had been a fluke. But NO, if anything it was worse as we were now up to freeway speeds of 60 plus miles per hour.

Rugala-Staunton dealership was on our way home so I stopped and talked to the service manager, but he was too busy to even take a ride with me. So, a few days later, I went to the dealership again, and again they were too busy to pay me any attention. So, I went to the owner of the dealership and told him my problem, asking only for someone to take a ride with me to experience my complaint. The owner assigned a salesperson to me and I drove him to the nearby freeway, opened the rear windows and accelerated the car. The salesperson could not believe what he was hearing, and told me to return to the dealership so he could try out another automobile of the same vintage. He took out a brand new twin of mine, drove it himself, and told me to get in touch with the Buick division of General Motors, admitting that something drastic was wrong with the car.

So a few days later, I called the number in the book that came with the car, had a young lady answer, who listened to my story and assigned a number to my complaint.

The number is CO1056642. I called later, had a man answer, he took down the pertinent information that I gave him, and there it sat. About a week later, I called again, and had another man answer to my number, told me he would investigate, and would call me in an hour. When he called, he told me that he had called several dealerships in the area and they had had complaints about the same problem. He called it a ~~design~~ fault and what would I suggest he do. I told him that I thought the first thing would be to fix it, barring that, change the car, and

finally, compensate me for having to put up with it. He told me to wait while he called his supervisor, and he would contact me the next day. When he finally called, he said that since it was a design fault, I would just have to live with it. These words are not verbatim, they did tell me that they taped the conversations for my protection, so the records should be there.

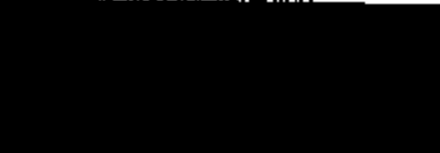
The name of the salesperson who rode with me the first time to verify my complaint was Jake Jacobitz who can be reached at the Rugala-Staunton dealership. I am sure he will verify the wild gyrations of the car at speeds exceeding about 45 MPH.

I made my first call to Buick when my mileage was about 4700 miles and the last call about a week or so ago, the mileage stood at about 5100. The five phone calls were in a time frame of about three weeks in between the parameters of the mileage I have given you. My present mileage is 5252.

Since I am 78 years old, and my health is not the best, I had the car placed in my wife's name, assuming that she would not have too much trouble if I were not there to help her. Her name is Barbara J. Kotila, at the same address as mine.

Finally, here is vin number of the care....2G4WS52JOY1224534
My book says the date first delivered was February, 21, year 2000 with an odometer reading of 15 miles. And the final phone conversation was with a man named Richard. I did not get his last name.

Thank you for listening.



My wife, [REDACTED], the legal owner, lives at the same address.

My e-mail address is

I did not mention that the price of the car was slightly over \$20,000