


DOT Auto Safety Hotline		FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 231	
 U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration		Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ) NATIONWIDE 1-888-DASH-2-DOT 1-888-327-4238 www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline	
OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)		Date Received	Od. or rt. dt od. rt up. ltr
W. WINDSOR NJ		05-DEC-2002	Reference No. 8023782
Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of report to the manufacturer of your vehicle? In the absence of an authorization, NHTSA WILL NOT provide your name and address to the vehicle manufacturer.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Signature of Owner		Date 1/10/03	
VEHICLE INFORMATION			
Vehicle Ident. No. (VIN) (Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side)	Vehicle Make	Vehicle Make	Current Odometer Reading as of
1HGCG5648WA091913	HONDA	ACCORD	1998 54,168 11/25/02
Purchase Date	Serviced at Honda of Princeton Dealer's Name Simon's Autosport Honda		Engine Size (CID/CC/L)
11/98	City Bridgewater State NJ Zip Code 08807		No Cylinders 6, 5th. <input type="checkbox"/> Turbo Diesel Gas Fuel Injectio
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Used bought as new	Transmission Type	Antilock Brakes	Restraint System
	<input type="checkbox"/> Manual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Automatic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3-Point Belt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Driverside Airbag <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Passengerside Airbag <input type="checkbox"/> Motorbelt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2-Point Bel
			Cruise Control
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
			Drive Train
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Front Rear <input type="checkbox"/> 4-Wheel
			Vehicle Type
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Car <input type="checkbox"/> Van <input type="checkbox"/> Minivan <input type="checkbox"/> Other
			Sport Ut Truck Motorcycle
			Body Style
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2-Door <input type="checkbox"/> 4-Door <input type="checkbox"/> Stationwagon <input type="checkbox"/> Pick Up <input type="checkbox"/> Truck
FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION			
Component	Part Name(s)	Location	Failed Part(s)
07300000	POWER TRAIN:TRANSMISSION:AUTOMATIC	<input type="checkbox"/> Left <input type="checkbox"/> Front <input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Rear	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original <input type="checkbox"/> Replacement
No of Failures	Date(s) of Failure(s)	Failed Part(s)	NHTSA Previously
1	11/25/02 Mileage at Failure(s) 54,168 Vehicle Speed at Failure(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
APPLICATION INCIDENT INFORMATION			
(Please describe in detail the incident(s), failure(s), crash(es), and injury(ies) on the back of this form)			
Crash	Fire	Number of Persons Injured	Number of Fatalities
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		
		Estimated Property Damage	Reported to Police
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF FAILURE(S), INCIDENT(S), INJURY(IES)			
CONSUMER NOTICE: TRANSMISSION FLUID LEAKING ON GROUND, VEHICLE WAS SERVICED BY MY DEALER. TECHNICIAN NOTICE TRANSMISSION NEED TO BE REPLACED AT CONSUMER COST. PLEASE PROVIDE FURTHER INFORMATION. TS			
see attached 12/4/02 letter to American Honda, 11/26/02 bill from Amco and letter to my husband from Honda, service report from Honda of Princeton dated 11/25/02 recommended transmission replacement at my cost of \$5860 or \$4260 plus tax, (cont'd)			
CONTINUE ON BACK IF NEEDED			
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 Incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies)

52,500 mile service report from Honda of Princeton dated 10/9/02 with no reference to any transmission problem, 9/18/02 Honda of Princeton service report on ignition switch safety recall, and 45,000 mile Honda of Princeton service report dated 12/6/01.

Despite all recommended Honda service and maintenance being done by dealer, transmission failed at less than 5 years. Your NHTSA records indicate dozens of other such Transmission failures. I would like a safety recall to be made on the 1998 Accord before people die from the safety defects. Honda has experienced similar problems with the 2000+2001 Accord + extended the warranty to 7 years or 100,000 miles. Honda should be required to do the same with the 1998 Accord.

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

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



NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO 73173 WASHINGTON, D.C.

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

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
DOT Auto Safety Hotline, NSA-10.1
400 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590



**VEHICLE
OWNER'S
QUESTIONNAIRE**

DOT AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE

TO REPORT VEHICLE SAFETY DEFECTS
COMPLETE THIS FORM
OR

DASH2DOT

and dial toll free at

1-888-DASH-2-DOT

1-888-327-4236

DOT Auto Safety Hotline
(DASH) 2 DOT



U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration
<http://www.nhtsa.gov>

[REDACTED]
West Windsor, New Jersey [REDACTED]

Telephone: [REDACTED]

E mail: [REDACTED]

December 4, 2002
American Honda Motor Co., Inc.
1919 Torrance Blvd.
Torrance, California 90501

Dear Sir or Madam:

Re: Case # N012002-11-2600012

This letter is in further reference to the above-referenced case number which my husband, [REDACTED] reported to your automobile customer service telephone number on 11/26/02. As discussed, my 1998 Honda Accord, VIN 1HGCG5648WA091913, with a delivery date of 1/1/98, experienced a problem with the transmission, which necessitated my spending \$3211 to have the problem repaired and warranted. My vehicle has been serviced regularly at Honda of Princeton (987 State Rd., Princeton, New Jersey 08540) since I purchased the vehicle. I have brought the vehicle in for each regularly recommended maintenance and also brought the vehicle in to Honda of Princeton for the ignition switch recall in the summer of 2002. My vehicle had the 52,500 mile service performed on 10/9/02 with the mileage indicator at 52299. The ignition switch recall replacement was performed on 9/18/02 at mileage 51533. The 45,000 mile service was performed on 12/8/01 at mileage 44823.

On November 24, 2002, my husband noticed some fluid on the garage floor after I pulled the vehicle out of the garage. We decided to bring the vehicle in to Honda of Princeton and left it there overnight with a sample of the fluid in a plastic bag to help the mechanic there identify the problem. The vehicle had a mileage of 54,168 at the time. On the afternoon of November 25, 2002, my husband and I had several telephone discussions with Bob, from Honda of Princeton, who advised that they had identified the problem with the vehicle and they recommended that the entire transmission be replaced. The only options recommended by Bob were to either replace the transmission with a new Honda transmission at a cost of \$5880 plus tax, or to replace the transmission with a rebuilt transmission (a Howard remanufactured one) at a cost of \$4260 plus tax. (A copy of that service report is enclosed.) Bob advised that the vehicle was no longer under warranty for the transmission. Bob did not suggest that his service manager could discuss this situation with American Honda Motor Co. ("Honda"), to ascertain whether Honda would pay for the repairs. Bob further advised that it would take at least a week and a half to get either transmission and he could not give us a loaner car in the meantime.

Faced with such excessive repair costs and needing the vehicle as soon as possible, we proceeded to make arrangements with Aamco to have the transmission rebuilt at a cost of \$3,211.69, including a lifetime warranty on their

work. As indicated in the enclosed papers from Aamco, they found that the pump assembly needed to be replaced, as did the secondary shaft and the torque converter. The cost for those parts was \$918.11 plus 6% sales tax.

When my husband reported the problem on 11/26/02 to Holly at the customer service number at American Honda, it was suggested that we should have discussed the situation more before proceeding to Aamco. Holly indicated that Honda's policy is not to pay for an independent agency to repair the vehicle. I am quite upset at the suggestion that we should have gotten along without the vehicle and tried to negotiate a resolution of this problem over the Thanksgiving weekend. I needed to have the vehicle operable as soon as possible, so that was not practical.

The remedy I am seeking from Honda is to be reimbursed, or made whole, for the cost of the repair work and warranty from Aamco, of \$3211.69. I have enclosed a copy of our bills from Aamco and their report on the transmission. It would appear to a reasonable person that someone buying a new 1998 Honda which is regularly maintained and serviced at a Honda dealer, expects the transmission to not fail before the vehicle is even 5 years old and has only 54,168 miles on it. The fact that the vehicle was serviced on 10/9/02 by the Honda dealer and no problem was noticed further suggests that the dealer was negligent in not noticing any problem with the transmission. What is the point of having a vehicle regularly serviced by the dealer, other than to spot problems before they lead to a \$4500 - \$6,000 repair cost? Surely, if the transmission needed to be totally replaced or rebuilt at mile 54,168, than something was the matter with it at mile 52,299. The vehicle has never been in any accident, has been regularly maintained and has been driven in a responsible manner. The main reason I purchased a Honda Accord (and two other Honda vehicles previously) was the advertised reliability of the vehicle. If I wanted to pay for a rebuilt transmission on a vehicle less than 5 years old, there were a host of other manufacturers I could have considered for my new vehicle in January of 1998.

When my husband reported the problem to your office on 11/26/02, your representative advised that the Honda Accord for 2000 and 2001 had experienced problems with its transmission, so frequently that Honda had extended the warranty on those transmissions for 7 years or 100,000 miles. I doubt that I am the only 1998 Honda Accord owner who has experienced a transmission failure at such a low mileage. It is certainly within Honda's power to offer to stand behind the reliability of its vehicles and back up its advertising. I am also notifying the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration of this apparent defect with the Accord's 1998 transmission. It appears that governmental agency is quite familiar with the 1998 Accord, since they were involved with the ignition switch recall in the summer of 2002. Fortunately, I was not involved in any accident related to the defective transmission. However, other owners of 1998 Accords may not be as fortunate.

Accordingly, I am seeking to be made whole by Honda for the defective transmission and the costs incurred by my family in having the transmission rebuilt and warrantied by Aamco. I would appreciate Honda's response to this letter within 30 days, in the event that Honda seeks a resolution of the matter at

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this level. We had been considering purchasing a new Honda when our second car needs replacement. However, such a decision now will be influenced by whether or not Honda stands behind the reliability of our 1998 Honda Accord. I believe it would be unconscionable for Honda not to stand behind the reliability of its vehicle, given the above information.

If you need some additional information from my family, please advise. I would hope that Honda is interested in resolving this matter without my pursuing other remedies.

Sincerely, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Enclosures: Aamco reports and bills
Honda of Princeton maintenance records

THE ATTACHMENTS TO THIS DOCUMENT HAVE BEEN REMOVED TO PROTECT UNWARRANTED INVASION OF PERSONAL PRIVACY PURSUANT TO EXEMPTION 6 OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(6).