

U.S. Department
of TransportationNational Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

DOT Auto Safety Hotline

Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ)

NATIONWIDE 1-888-DASH-2-DOT

1-888-327-4236

www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 436

Date Received

30-OCT-2000

 Od_or _____
 Rt_dt _____
 od_rt _____
 up_ltr _____

Reference No.

874141

 Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of 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 _____ Date ____/____/____

VEHICLE INFORMATION

Vehicle Ident. No. (VIN) (Listed at front of windshield or driver's door)	Vehicle Make	Vehicle Model	Vehicle Year	Current Odometer Reading
1GBKP37J8X3302895	WINNEBAGO	ITASCA	1998	

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

Transmission Type ☐ Manual ☐ Automatic	Antilock Brakes ☐ Yes ☒ No	Restraint System ☐ 3-Point Belt ☐ Motorbell ☐ Driverside Airbag ☐ 2-Point Belt ☐ Passengerside Airbag	Cruise Control ☐ Yes ☒ No	Drive Train ☐ Front ☐ Rear ☐ 4-Wheel	Vehicle Type ☐ Car ☐ Sport Ult ☐ Van ☐ Truck ☐ Minivan ☐ Motorcycle ☐ Other _____	Body Style ☐ 2-Door ☐ 4-Door ☐ Stationwagon ☐ Pick Up Truck ☒ Other _____
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FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Component 02120000	Part Name(s) SUSPENSION:INDEPENDENT FRONT SHOCK ABSORBER	Location ☐ Left ☐ Right ☐ Front ☐ Rear	Failed Part(s) ☐ Original ☐ Replacement
No of Failures	Date(s) of Failure(s) 01-AUG-2000 Mileage at Failure(s) _____ Vehicle Speed at Failure(s) _____	Failed Part(s) Available? ☐ Yes ☐ No	NHTSA Previously Contacted? ☐ Yes ☐ 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 ☐ Yes ☒ No	Fire ☐ Yes ☒ No	Number of Persons Injured	Number of Fatalities	Estimated Property Damage	Reported to Police ☐ Yes ☒ No
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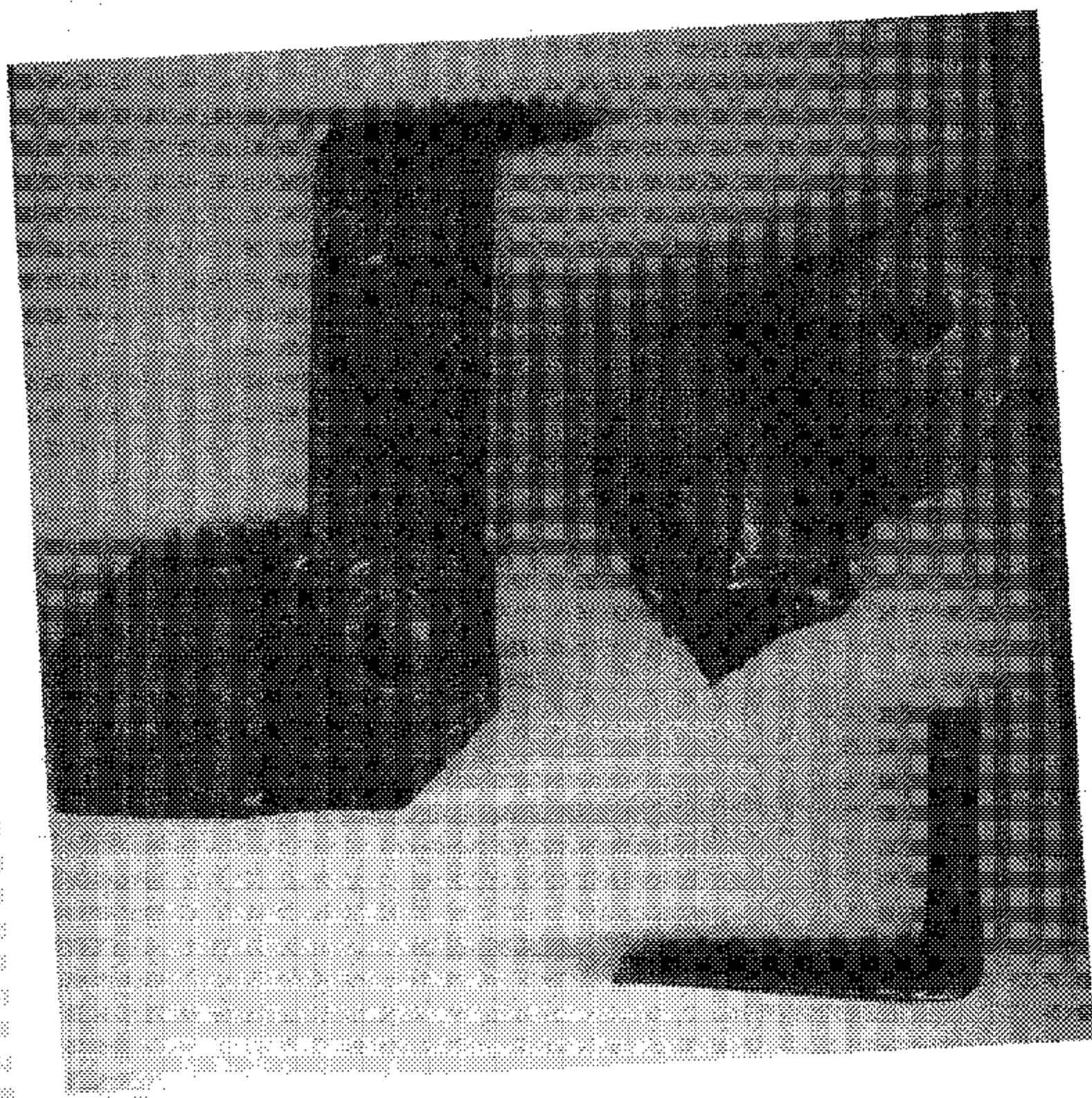
NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF FAILURE(S), INCIDENT(S), INJURY(IES)

SHOCK BRACKET BROKE UP & FELL & CAUGHT ON THE HYDRAULIC WIRING. 2 WEEKS LATER, OTHER LEFT SIDE DID THE SAME THING. BRACKET COULD HAVE FALLEN & SUCKED IN THE TIRE, CAUSING A DEADLY ACCIDENT. DEALER IS GIVING CONSUMER THE RUN AROUND. PART IS MANUFACTURED BY ITASCA. BOTH BRACKETS WERE TAKEN OFF & CHEVROLET OR ITASCA WANT TO BE RESPONSIBLE IN SAYING WHY BRACKETS WERE BOLTED TO THE FRAME. CONSUMER BOLTED THE SHOCK TO THE FRAME & ILLIMINATED THE BRACKET ALL TOGETHER. THE YEAR OF THE IS VEHICLE IS A 1999.*AK

CONTINUED ON BACK (SEE)

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.

 U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration		DOT Auto Safety Hotline Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ) NATIONWIDE 1-888-DASH-2-DOT 1-888-327-4236 www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline		FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 438 Date Received: <u>10-13-25</u> <u>30-OCT-2000</u> OFFICE DEFECTS INVESTIGATION											
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3-T's RV Products, Inc.

INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE 3-T'S SHOCK AND STEERING STABILIZER PACKAGE FOR: CHEVROLET P-30, 32 CHASSIS 14,000 TO 16,500 GVW

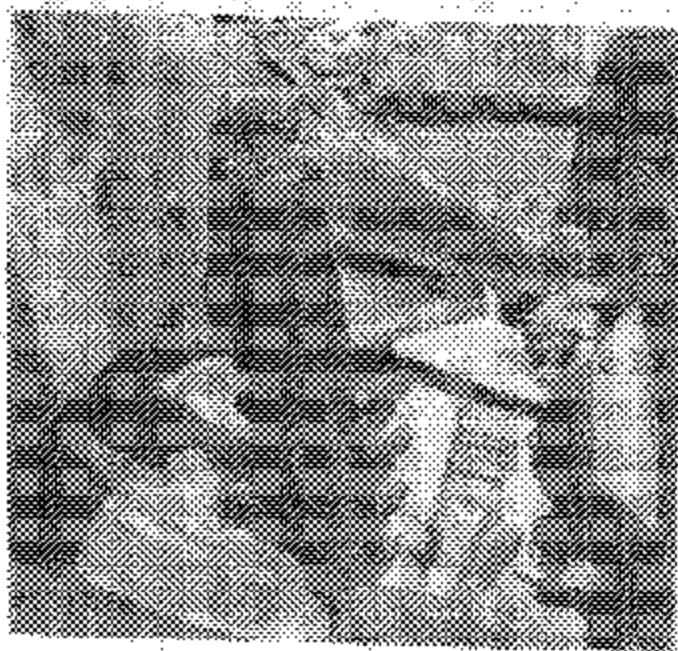
Parts List:	2	72" Shock
	2	Shock Mounting Bracket
	2	5/8" x 1 1/2" Grade 8 Bolt with Lock Nuts
	4	9/16" Grade 8 Flat Washers
	2	3/4" x 1" Grade 8 Bolt with Lock Nuts
	1	Shock Absorber
	1	Instruction Sheet

READ INSTRUCTION SHEET BEFORE STARTING INSTALLATION

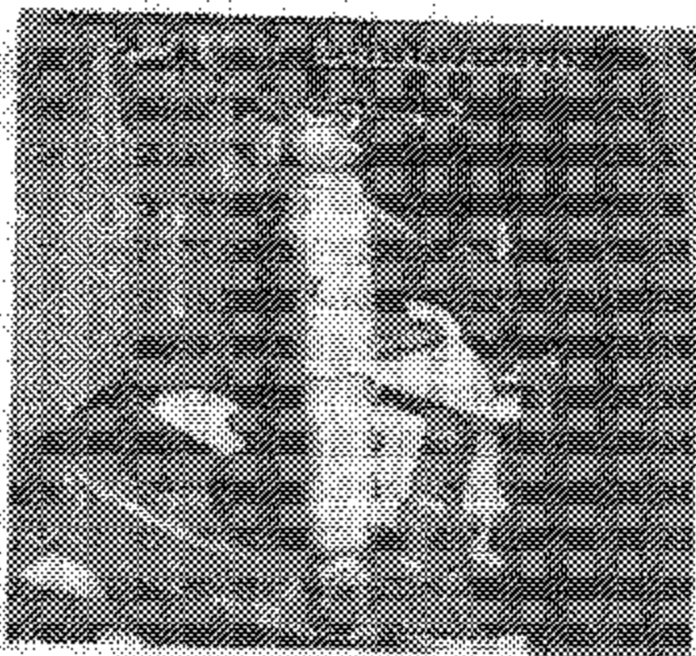
1. Raise vehicle using hoist or jack, place jack stands under the A arms and block rear wheels.
2. Remove front struts.
3. Starting on the right side, remove 1/4" bolt in bottom flange of the frame just below Shock Mounting bolt hole holding two metal flange lines in place and replace with our 1/4" bolt and use with top bracket up against bottom of frame. **(NOTE: FINGER TIGHTEN ONLY AT THIS TIME, YOU ARE MAKING THE SHOCK CUT AND FORWARD)** install 5/8" bolt with a 9/16" grade 8 washer on the bracket into frame shock mounting hole. Install grade 8 washer and nut on inside of frame, leave finger tight. See figure 1. Torque 1/4" bolt to 10 ft. lbs. then torque 5/8" bolt to 240 ft. lbs.
4. Repeat on left side using existing hole in bottom of frame flange.

(OVER)

STOCK



EQUIPPED



Hotline (Chuck Campbell)
Motor Home Magazine
P. O. Box 54461, Boulder, CO 80328-4461

November 6, 2000

RE: Safety Warning for owners Chev chassis on RV
Our rig - 1999 Winnebago Itasca Sunrise SE
Cost to Purchase - Front Shock Stabilizer Package - \$315
Cost to Repair - \$131.22 Cost to Remove - \$84.54, Canadian

We have given up on reimbursement. We only want others to be warned of the hazard. We're attaching a letter we sent to Itasca & Chev, but let us condense the story.

We found a front shock hanging attached by only one end! The only thing that kept the "jousting sword" (shock) from impaling our front tire was the wiring to the hydraulic jack. GM dealer welded the failed bracket. Within a 1000 miles the bracket had failed again just above the weld and the bracket on the other side was cracked as well. *(You should know that we have regularly weighed our vehicle since it's purchase and were not, on this trip, nor at any other time over weight for the vehicle rating.)*

We called Itasca and got the names of several repair facilities. Most recommended we just find a welding shop and repair again. We finally went to a GM Truck facility. The mechanic said he had only seen one other bracket like this and it was in the same shape as ours. He recommended removing the brackets and bolting directly to the frame. We did that and completed our trip without problem.

On our return we wrote the attached letter. We asked for reimbursement, but more importantly to us - "What was the bracket for? Is this the directly bolting to the frame a correct and safe thing arrangement?" We never heard from Itasca. But Chev (maker of our chassis) called to say they'd be happy to reimburse our costs. We just needed to call Lenny at our local dealer to make arrangements to show him original invoices. The clerk who called could not answer what was the right arrangement but felt this could be handled locally. We called Lenny and what he said was that he was to verify that the bracket was a Chev part. He never heard of a bracket like this but "bring it in and our mechanic will look at it."

Instead we started through the documentation with our vehicle. We found details on the bracket. A company called 3T RV Products manufactured it. It had a 12 month warranty and we discovered it's failure after 18 months. The bracket was apparently what we got with the special "front suspension package" option. The bracket was designed to change the angle of the shock to "improve handling". The man we talked to at 3T RV

apologized and asked for our address. He would ship replacement brackets. He said they had gotten a shipment of bad steel and a 'few' had gotten out.

We hope you will advise your readers that if they purchased the front suspension option they should check the condition of these brackets. This is a dangerous situation and it's obvious to us that Itasca is going to do nothing about warning their customers. We called the National Transportation & Safety Commission. They took the report but said they could do nothing until they "saw a trend". So either a few rigs need to roll over and kill a some people (Firestone-ish) ---or maybe you could just warn them up front before they find out the hard way.



Attachments:

SASE

Letter of complaint to Chev/Itasca

3T RV brochure & bracket picture

Manager - Chevrolet Customer Assistance Center
P. O. Box 7047
Troy, MI 48007-7047

August 25, 2000

Re Itasca: Model - Sunrise SE with Chevy Chassis

Purchased: 4-13-99 with Mileage 1713

Current mileage: 14200 (mileage when problem first identified and addressed was 7800)

Vin #: 1GBKP37J8X3302895

In April 1999 we bought a new 29' Itasca Sunrise SE with a Chev Chassis. We took it on a number of local trips over the next year to learn how to operate everything well. But, we were always planning toward our trip of a lifetime - ALASKA. The date to leave was set - July 16, 2000. Caravan partners were secured.

Wed. July 12, while doing last minute checks, we discovered to our horror that a front shock was hanging loose. It had only been saved from dropping, to possibly slash a tire, by the wiring to the hydraulic jacks. A support bracket had broken. The local Chevy Dealer couldn't get us into the shop in time. The local GMC dealer (who regularly works on our GMC Suburban) agreed to help us but told us he wasn't authorized to do warranty work. Friday July 14, they welded the bracket for \$131.22 (see attached invoice) and we were off as scheduled.

We were over the Canadian border the first night. Everything was going well. We took a new toll road and were into Jasper by the third night. We checked the weld several times each day, just a little nervous, since the problem could so easily get us into a life threatening situation. We believe the loose shock could rip a tire or just cause the shifting weight of the rig to corner uncontrollably.

Our worst fears came to pass in Jasper. The bracket had snapped off again below the last weld - and we weren't even to the rough ALCAN roadway yet!

In a total panic we looked in our owners' manual and found the names of authorized mechanics. They were from 100 to 400 miles away. We started calling. Edmonton (400 miles) seemed like the largest city, maybe the most experienced shop. We called there late Tuesday. They couldn't fit us in before the following Monday! They felt someone closer could handle the job. We called the ITASCA hotline. They gave us several additional places to try, which we appreciated. As we called, most places recommended we just see if Jasper had a welding shop and weld again. (We didn't feel comfortable with that.) Some were too busy to handle us quickly or didn't have a lift that would handle a motor home for this kind of job. Finally we temporarily bolted the shock and drove to Hinton, Alberta. They looked at the problem and said they couldn't handle it until the following Monday and what they would do is call a local welder to repair what had already failed once. They suggested we go on to Grand Prairie where there was an

authorized GMC truck shop, so we headed north another 100 miles. They said they would take us on a stand-by basis and fit us in if they could, so we camped out front.

When their mechanic looked over our situation, our dismay increased. Now, we not only had one broken bracket on the left, but cracks in the bracket on the right side, as well. The mechanic said he had only seen these brackets once before and they were in a similar state. What he had done in that case was completely eliminate them and attach directly to the frame, as most shocks do. The owner of the rig he had repaired this way lived locally and he had experienced no problem with the arrangement.

So that is what was done at a cost of \$84.54, Canadian (see attached invoice). We completed our trip (checking the shocks regularly) without further problems.

Our remaining concerns are:

1. What is the purpose of these brackets? What were they supposed to do for us?
2. We particularly ordered the extra front-end suspension package, is the problem related to that?
3. Since all the mechanics we talked to were surprised by this bracket arrangement, is it unique to our Itasca Model?
4. Why is our local GMC dealer not authorized to do warranty work?
5. The Motor Home is still under warranty and we feel we should be reimbursed the costs of dealing with this very frightening and distressing mechanical failure. Calculating with the current Canadian exchange rate, we estimate an appropriate refund to be \$190.40.
6. We would like to know what mechanical correction GM recommends for this failure. Is there additional work we should undertake?



cc: Winnebago Industries, P.O. Box 152, Forest City, Iowa Atten: Warranty Dept.