



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 130

Date Received

25-JAN-2001

Od\_or \_\_\_\_\_  
R\_dt \_\_\_\_\_  
Pd\_rt \_\_\_\_\_  
Ip\_ltr \_\_\_\_\_

Reference No.

878993

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) <small>(Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side)</small>	Vehicle Make	Vehicle Model	Vehicle Year	Current Odometer Reading		
4S2CY58Y4R4327403	ISUZU TRUCK	RODEO	1994			
Purchase Date <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Used	Dealer's Name _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____	Engine Size (CID/CCL) _____ No. Cylinders _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Turbo <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel <input type="checkbox"/> Gas <input type="checkbox"/> Fuel Injection			
Transmission Type <input type="checkbox"/> Manual <input type="checkbox"/> Automatic	Antilock Brakes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Restraint System <input type="checkbox"/> 3-Point Belt <input type="checkbox"/> Motorbelt <input type="checkbox"/> Driverside Airbag <input type="checkbox"/> 2-Point Belt <input type="checkbox"/> Passengerside Airbag	Cruise Control <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Drive Train <input type="checkbox"/> Front <input type="checkbox"/> Rear <input type="checkbox"/> 4-Wheel	Vehicle Type <input type="checkbox"/> Car <input type="checkbox"/> Sport Util <input type="checkbox"/> Van <input type="checkbox"/> Truck <input type="checkbox"/> Minivan <input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycle <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Body Style <input type="checkbox"/> 2-Door <input type="checkbox"/> 4-Door <input type="checkbox"/> Stationwagon <input type="checkbox"/> Pick Up Truck <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other _____

### FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Component 15700100	Part Name(s) EQUIPMENT:CARRIER:SPARE TIRE	Location <input type="checkbox"/> Left <input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Front <input type="checkbox"/> Rear	Failed Part(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Original <input type="checkbox"/> Replacement
No. of Failures	Date(s) of Failure(s) Mileage at Failure(s) 102000 Vehicle Speed at Failure(s)	Failed Part(s) Available? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	NHTSA Previously Contacted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Fire <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Number of Persons Injured	Number of Fatalities	Estimated Property Damage	Reported to Police <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
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### NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF FAILURE(S), INCIDENT(S), INJURY(IES)

WHILE DRIVING AT APPROXIMATELY 40 MPH DRIVER'S REAR TIRE FELL OFF WHICH COULD HAVE CAUSED A CRASH. PLEASE PROVIDE FURTHER INFORMATION. \*AK

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.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DOT Auto Safety Hotline</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">NATIONWIDE 1-888-DASH-2-DOT 1-888-327-4236 www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline</p>	<p><b>FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 150</b></p> <p>Date Received <u>25 JAN 2001</u></p> <p><b>INVESTIGATION</b></p>
<p>U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration</p>	<p>Od_or _____ rt_dt _____ od_r1 _____ up_ltr _____</p>

<b>OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)</b>	
	<b>659605</b>
Work Number _____	
Home Number _____	

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of report to the manufacturer of your vehicle?  YES  NO

In the absence of an authorized representative, provide your name and address to the vehicle manufacturer.

Signature of Owner \_\_\_\_\_ Date 2/27/01

VEHICLE INFORMATION				
Vehicle Ident. No. (VIN.) <small>(located at bottom of windshield or driver's side)</small> <b>4S2CY58V4R4327403</b>	Vehicle Make <b>ISUZU TRUCK</b>	Vehicle Model <b>RODEO</b>	Vehicle Year <b>1994</b>	Current Odometer Reading

Purchase Date <u>9/94</u>	Dealer's Name _____	Engine Size (CID/CC/L) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Turbo <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gas <input type="checkbox"/> Fuel Injection
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Used	City <u>Sierra Vista</u> State <u>AZ</u> Zip Code _____	No Cylinders <u>6</u>	

Transmission Type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manual <input type="checkbox"/> Automatic	Antilock Brakes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Restraint System <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3-Point Belt <input type="checkbox"/> Driverside Airbag <input type="checkbox"/> Passengerside Airbag <input type="checkbox"/> Motorbelt <input type="checkbox"/> 2-Point Belt	Cruise Control <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Drive Train <input type="checkbox"/> Front <input type="checkbox"/> Rear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4-Wheel	Vehicle Type <input type="checkbox"/> Car <input type="checkbox"/> Van <input type="checkbox"/> Minivan <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sport <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Truck <input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycle	Body Style <input type="checkbox"/> 2-Door <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4-Door <input type="checkbox"/> Stationwagon <input type="checkbox"/> Pick Up Truck <input type="checkbox"/> Other
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FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION			
Component <b>15700100</b>	Part Name(s) <b>EQUIPMENT:CARRIER:SPARE TIRE</b> <u>Lug nuts</u>	Location <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Left <input type="checkbox"/> Front <input type="checkbox"/> Right <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rear	Failed Part(s) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original <input type="checkbox"/> Replacement

No of Failures <b>1</b>	Date(s) of Failure(s) <u>2/23/01</u>	Failed Part(s) Available? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	NHTSA Previously Contacted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Mileage at Failure(s) <u>102000</u>		Vehicle Speed at Failure(s) <u>50 mph</u>	

APPLICATION INCIDENT INFORMATION					
<small>(Please describe in detail the incident(s), failure(s), crash(es), and injury(ies) on the back of this form)</small>					
Crash <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Fire <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Number of Persons Injured <u>0</u>	Number of Fatalities <u>0</u>	Estimated Property Damage \$ <u>1000 1020</u>	Reported to Police <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF FAILURE(S), INCIDENT(S), INJURY(IES)**

WHILE DRIVING AT APPROXIMATELY 50 MPH DRIVER'S REAR wheel FELL OFF WHICH COULD HAVE CAUSED A CRASH. PLEASE PROVIDE FURTHER INFORMATION. \*AK

all of the lug nuts and one bolt were missing on driver's rear tire/wheel. additionally, one nut was missing and several others were loose on the passenger's rear tire/wheel.

- SEE ATTACHED -

CONTINUE ON BACK IF NEEDED

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February 15, 2001

American Isuzu Motors Inc.  
Owner Relations  
13340 183<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Cerritos, CA 90702-6007

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing this letter to inform you of a serious incident we experienced with our 1994 Isuzu Rodeo. While it is certainly the first major problem we have had with this dependable and fun to drive vehicle, it is one which will make us seriously reconsider buying another Isuzu vehicle. Our Rodeo recently crept over 100,000 miles, and we were considering trading "up" for a Trooper or purchasing another Rodeo. It's a vehicle that we have absolutely enjoyed and recommended to family and friends. As a result of our past recommendation, two family members purchased Rodeos and several friends across the country now drive Isuzus.

The incident occurred on January 23, 2001 while my wife and daughter were driving home in our Rodeo from a local mall. They were traveling on U.S. Route 1 in moderate traffic at approximately 50 miles per hour when the rear driver side wheel inexplicably fell off the vehicle (just the tire). My wife was able to maintain control of the vehicle and guided it to a stop nearly 1/2 a mile down the road. The wheel bounced by and stopped in the middle of the two northbound lanes on Route 1 and stopped traffic. Fortunately neither my wife nor my three year old daughter were injured (although badly shaken up) and no additional accident or property damage resulted from the wheel falling off the vehicle.

Our insurance company dispatched a tow truck to the scene and the Rodeo had to be moved on a flatbed truck with a "skate" due to the missing wheel. Before dragging the Rodeo onto the tow truck, the driver checked the vehicle and other wheels. He observed that the rear driver side wheel and lug nuts were gone, although the rest of the drum and rotor assembly was still present. Then he checked the passenger side rear wheel and discovered that one lug nut was missing and several others were loose to the touch. In his assessment, it was only a matter of time before this wheel would have fallen off the Rodeo as well.

The Rodeo was towed to Dick Greenfield Isuzu (Lawrence, New Jersey) where we have had it serviced for almost 3 years. The last service on our Rodeo had been at Greenfield Isuzu only 7 weeks and 2000 miles before the accident. This service, the 90,000 mile maintenance, is one of the most complete and thorough services recommended by Isuzu. In addition to the routine maintenance, a number of additional repairs were made to our Rodeo, including the repair of the rear tailgate latch, replacement of the O2 sensor, and major rear brake work. This service on our Rodeo was completed by Greenfield Isuzu just days before the Thanksgiving holiday as we were preparing for a trip to Washington, DC. It took several days for the service to be completed, and even with several days of work, the truck was not returned until late in the evening. During the service, at least one other mistake (that we know of) was made by the service staff working on the Rodeo. My wife was told that the O2 sensor needed to be replaced and was quoted a \$60 price on the repair part. When the bill arrived the cost of the O2 sensor repair part had jumped over \$200. When my wife challenged the bill, she was told that the mistake was made because the shop was extremely busy with pre-holiday work. Greenfield Isuzu did adjust the bill for us.

Because we have very little mechanical or automotive repair background and we have had so few problems with the Rodeo, my wife and I spoke with several automotive repair experts, including two repair/service managers at local car dealerships and the service manager at another Isuzu dealership in New Jersey. All were shocked that the entire wheel simply fell off the vehicle. The Isuzu service manager I spoke with said that, in his experience, he had only seen this happen when part of the axle fell off along with the wheel. These professionals gave us the same mechanical diagnosis – in their opinions the tires had been improperly re-mounted following the 90,000 mile service. When I questioned how it could possibly take nearly two months and 2000 miles for an improperly re-mounted wheel to fall off, they all stated that it was absolutely possible for “hand-tightened” or improperly tightened lug nuts to remain tight enough for quite some time before finally falling off. As one service manager told me, “Wheels don’t just fall off vehicles...”. Wheels do not fail in the manner unless there is some type of human error. As the same service manager told me, “Tires explode, they pop, they get holes in them, all unavoidable accidents, but when one just falls off the truck, there’s no other reason than improper installation.” Combine these assessments with the fact that the passenger rear tire was close to falling off as well, and any reasonable person would conclude that the mistake was made at Greenfield Isuzu. This was not a mechanical breakdown – it was a mechanical malfunction caused by human error.

When I met with Jeff Reeb, the General Manager of Greenfield Isuzu, he told me that he was “absolutely certain that the service had nothing to do with the accident” and that the tires were properly re-mounted. The management team at Greenfield Isuzu had a number of very interesting theories about how the tires could have fallen off, all of which left other maintenance professionals we spoke with just shaking their heads in disbelief. One of the theories is that the vehicle was “vandalized” by some unknown persons while parked at the local mall. An interesting theory, but how these vandals could manage to loosen the lug nuts without setting off our car alarm is beyond me.

While we believe it is highly likely that the Rodeo was improperly serviced at Dick Greenfield Isuzu and the wheels were improperly re-mounted, what is even more disturbing to me is the thought that the staff at Greenfield Isuzu may be right. What if this wasn’t a mistake by their staff - that it just might be possible for a condition to develop to cause one wheel to fly off an Isuzu Rodeo while another wheel is just hanging by its threads, ready to drop. The safety implications of this possibility are enormous – the vehicle was just serviced the Isuzu trained technicians did not note any damage to the tire bolts or even to the tires themselves. If Greenfield is right, then this mechanical condition suddenly emerged in the last 7 weeks and the same mechanical problem surfaced simultaneously on two separate parts of our Rodeo – the rear driver side tire and the rear passenger side.

We have reported this safety issue to the National Highway Traffic Safety Division of the Department of Transportation, as well as to state and local safety boards. Many have expressed an interest in this issue. We understand that there have been previous complaints about the wheel bolts on Isuzu Rodeos.

While we are happy to be able to report that there were no serious injuries or damage as a result of this incident, we do believe that we have a responsibility to the family and friends who are now driving Isuzu trucks based upon our favorable recommendations. More importantly, we believe that Isuzu has a responsibility to investigate and determine how this accident could have happened, and to take steps to prevent similar accidents from happening in the future. Because of the minimal damage done to the truck, our insurance company has declined to take formal action

against Greenfield Isuzu. We would like to resolve this issue with you without having to involve an attorney as we believe it would be in both of our best interests.

As we await the results of your investigation, American Express has agreed to temporarily suspend the almost \$1600 payment for the November 90,000 mile service to Greenfield Isuzu as the full and proper execution of the service has now been seriously called into question.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at [REDACTED] if we can provide additional information about this unfortunate incident.

[REDACTED]

cc:  
Thomas Kunz, Esq