



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Memorandum

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

Subject: Submittal to the Public File
ODI Investigation EA03-023

Date: November 30, 2004

From: 
Rosa Howell, Investigation Case Assistant
Office of Defects Investigation/NSA-10

Reply to: EA03-023

To: EA03-023

Please place the following attachment, EMAIL FROM 3/2004 - 11/2004 TO
ODI in file EA03-023.

Attachment(s)

#

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2004 12:34 PM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: RE: EA03-023

Michael

I need to get those parts!! I will call her asap.

thankx; Pete

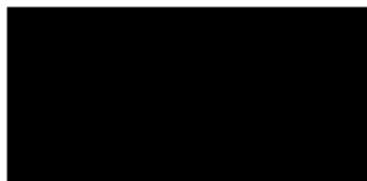
-----Original Message-----

From: Jordan, Michael
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2004 12:32 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: EA03-023

Good afternoon Peter,

I received a phone call from a Ms. Daryl [REDACTED] (ODI Ref. No. 10038398) inquiring as to the status of our investigation and concerns she has with respect to her Insurance premiums going up, damage that allegedly resulted from the failure of the ball joint(s) installed on her 2000 Dodge Durango, etc. During our telephone conversation, she mentioned that she has the failed part(s) in her possession and can send them to the agency to assist with our investigation.

Her contact information is:



Thanku!
Jordan
x30576

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2004 12:31 PM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Durango problems

thankx; Pete

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED] [mailto:75141@comcast.net]
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2004 10:40 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Durango problems

I have been to many websites and most of them have your name and email address to be contacted about Dodge Durangos and Dodge Dakotas.

I have a 1999 Dodge Durango that we are financing through a place called Auto City. To our knowledge there was only one previous owner and it only had 83,000 miles on it. This was in October. Over the last two to three months we kept hearing noises under the passenger side front end. My father-in-law is a mechanic and said he would take a look at it. Well, he had went out of town and didn't get the chance. One evening I was watching the

CBS Evening News and heard about the ball joint problems and it sounded just like what was going on with ours. As soon as my father-in-law came back he took a look at it and sure enough the ball joints were horrible. While replacing them he noticed that our A Frame Bushings were also horrible. I am so thankful that my family and I were not hurt in any way because of the problems with this vehicle and I hope that no other families are hurt. I do not know if any of this may help but its worth the time and effort if it may help others not have to go through it. Thanks for your time and patience,

[REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2004 12:31 PM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: ???????recall

thankx; Pete

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2004 7:23 AM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: ???????recall

Mr Kivett,

I have sent a couple of e-mails and hadn't received any replies as of yet so I wasn't sure you had received them. Could you please answer a couple of questions for me? First, is there a separate investigation going on for the Dodge Dakota Quads and what is the number of complaints for this vehicle? Is the number you last quoted (749) inclusive of both the Durango and the Dakota Quad or is that just the Durango? The EA03-023 has only Durangos listed.

Also, are you going to add the Dakota Quad to the query list for service bulletins?

FYI, There is also a problem with the brakes on these vehicles, warped rotors and major pulsing and vibrating when applying brake. The front end on these vehicles obviously can't handle the stress put on it. Between the ball joints and the brakes, this vehicle is junk.

Please, please issue a recall!!! Daimler Chrysler is shutting out myself and all the many other customers who are having these issues. They won't take responsibility on their own. They would rather let someone get injured or killed instead of doing the right thing and admit there is a problem and correct it. Money is obviously most important to them. Our pleas are falling on deaf ears at Daimler Chrysler. I believe they are stalling in hopes a recall won't be issued and these vehicles will be out of warranty and they can soak us for more repairs.

I will send you their replies and you can see for yourself.

They are already scamming us on the front end alignment needed after the upper control arm is replaced.

I would appreciate some answers to my previous questions so that I may better defend my position if and when it becomes necessary to pursue in court.

Thank you [REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Thursday, March 25, 2004 10:18 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Ball joint complaint

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2004 7:17 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Ball joint complaint.

Dear Peter,
I got your name and email address from someone at dodgedakota.com in a forum about Dodge Dakota pickup ball joint problems.
I have a 2001 and was just told the left side is at "380" and the OE spec is "0", so it must be replaced. This is my own personal vehicle BTW.
The shop I took it to (not a Dodge dealership/shop) told me the factor OEM is designed poorly at best, so I will proceed and have my little shop down the street replace it with an after market part which will have a grease fitting.
Another issue: I complained from the first week of buying my truck new (as of 12/00) about a "clunk" in the front left suspension. They could never hear it. It has only continued to get louder and now I'm told this ball joint is the culprit.
I'm not sure if this is the proper way to file a complaint, but I felt I must address it somehow and thought this was a first best guess.
Thank you for your time and consideration. Please let me know if there's something else I should or need to do.

[REDACTED]

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Monday, March 29, 2004 6:11 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Dakota Ball Joints

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 29, 2004 1:43 AM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Dakota Ball Joints

Dear Peter Kivett,
I purchased a new Dodge Dakota 4X4, it currently has 41,000 miles on it. I have been experiencing front end noise due to ball joints since about 5,000 miles. It has been to the dealership multiple times and I have been told this is normal, I am about to do the work myself and void the front end warranty. It would be nice to know that something was happening to solve this problem. Dealerships seem to be ignoring the problems
Thank You
[REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kvett, Peter
Sent: Monday, March 29, 2004 10:53 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: ball joints

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 29, 2004 9:59 AM
To: Kvett, Peter
Subject: ball joints

Hi, my name is [REDACTED]. I own a 97 Dodge Dakota. I recently replaced my lower, upper ball joints and a front wheel bearing as a result of the ball joints going bad. My question is, will Daimler Chrysler be taking the fault for this problem, which is getting more involved every day? I know they have done a voluntary recall on the ball joints, but does the driver of each and every dakota and durango which has had problems get to be reimbursed for the high cost of this repair?

Please let me know if you have any other insight to this issue. I am on my way to class, I am a student at Iowa State University.

[REDACTED]

Free up your inbox with MSN Hotmail Extra Storage. Multiple plans available.

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Wednesday, March 31, 2004 11:34 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Engineering Analysis EA03-023

thankx Mike.....

---Original Message---

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 31, 2004 11:30 AM
To: Kivett, Peter
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Engineering Analysis EA03-023

Peter,

I understand you are the lead investigator on the ball joint problems on the Dodge Dakotas. I have a brand new 2004 Dakota that has a ball joint squeak starting already at just over 4000 miles. The local garage I took it to tells me that it is the start of the ball joint problems that Dakota's are notorious for. My short investigation on the Internet turned up all kinds of discussion and expensive horror stories. My son has a 2002 Dakota which has had the ball joints replaced 3 times also.

Obviously, this is a major design flaw and a significant safety hazard. According to the article on CBS, if these aren't taken care of, they will separate and the wheel comes off. Replacement of these parts by DaimlerChrysler is not enough. DaimlerChrysler needs to redesign these and the NHTSA needs to insist that they recall the effected vehicles and replace the ball joints with the redesigned parts.

And soon, as far as I'm concerned this problem is very much the same as the Ford tire problem. Let's not wait until all the loss of life that was experienced with that problems begins with the Dodge Dakota's and Durango's. I don't think the NHTSA wants that on their conscience.

Please let me know what your investigation has found and what recommendation the NHTSA will be making and in what time frame. I would like to get my ball joints fixed with non-defective, correctly designed parts.

Thank you.

[REDACTED]

cc: The Honorable Fred Upton

US House of Representatives

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Monday, April 05, 2004 9:40 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: 1997 Dodge Dakota Ball joints issues?

thankx Mike

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 04, 2004 3:57 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: 1997 Dodge Dakota Ball joints issues?

My dad has a 1997 Dodge Dakota he bought new. It now has 54,000 miles on it and needs new ball joints. The truck is babled and looks as good today as it did when he bought it new. The salesman is checking into it but if they wouldn't replace tires at 28,000 miles my guess is they will give him the run around on this also. What is the best way for him to try and get this taken care of? Do you have some documentation that he could use. My Dodge Ram has a 117,000 miles on it and has not had the ball joints replaced and they are still fine. I also get 45,000 - 48,000 miles out of 30,000 mile tires on my truck. My Dad was already screwed on the tires so it would be nice if Dodge could step up on this problem.

[REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Type:	Customer E-mail
From:	[REDACTED]
To:	"Webmaster <NHTSA>" <Webmaster@nhtsa.dot.gov>
Subject:	what are you doing?

Your mission statement, "People saving people," seems to be a hypocritical farce. You've been well aware of the problems surrounding the Dodge Durangos with the front end ball joints, and you just sit there and do nothing. You've been given months to try to figure out something that some barely high school educated mechanic figured in two minutes. Are you being paid off by the company? One can only imagine why you continue to drag your feet on this issue. My 1999 Durango's wheel came off while pulling into my driveway - this two days before my family of five were to track 300+ miles to see relatives over the Easter break. There will be some family, some day soon, who will not be as fortunate, and this will solely rest on the those who claim to be "People saving people."

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2004 12:12 PM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Engineering Analysis EA03-023

thankx Mike

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2004 11:37 AM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Engineering Analysis EA03-023

Mr. Kivett,
I own a 2000 Dodge Dakota Quad Cab 4x4. Last August, my wife and I felt and heard a popping noise from the front end of the truck. We took the truck to the local Dodge dealer and they informed us that the right side ball joint was bad and need to be replaced. \$800 dollars later, the right side ball joint was replaced.
I am quit concerned that my three year old truck at the time, needed to have the ball joint replaced. I am thankful that we had a warning before the complete failure of the ball joint. My other concern is that the left side will fail with my children and wife in the truck.
Please tell me that the investigation is proceeding and that Dodge will remedy the ball joint problem.
I can provide you details about my truck and whatever other information may assist in the investigation.

Best Regards,

[REDACTED]

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Thursday, April 15, 2004 12:50 PM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Dodge Dakot Ball joint

thankx mike.

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 15, 2004 12:33 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Dodge Dakot Ball joint

Mr. Kivett,

I am writing to tell you of a problem with my 1998 Dodge Dakota (70,000 miles, it's only 2 wheel drive and a regular cab which is probably one of the reasons it lasted this long, the quad cabs and Durangos seem to be much worse off). I brought it into the shop and they are now telling me the upper and lower ball joints are bad. Being that this is a costly repair (at least if you have it done at the dealer) of about \$1000 I decided to do some investigating. Online at <http://www.dodge dakotas.com/boards/idea/503-1.html> there are several other probably hundreds if not thousands of customers who are experiencing this problem. I was wondering if this was going to be enough of a problem to issue a recall, as I don't feel that this should be a problem with newer vehicles.

[REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Tuesday, April 20, 2004 9:56 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Engineering Analysis EA03-023

thankx again

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 17, 2004 4:26 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Engineering Analysis EA03-023

Hello,

I hope this is going to the correct area, I found this e-mail on a message board.

My email is about my Dodge Dakota and ball joint front end problems.

I own a 1996 Dodge Dakota SLT 4X4 that just broke 27000 miles. I recently moved to New Mexico from New Jersey to continue on my BS in Electrical Engineering. I have the commonly reported "popping" noise in my front end, and loose steering. My Ball joints are rusted and loose as well. Since I rely on this truck to get to school, and I must travel 71 miles through the desert, therefore this is making me very nervous.

The Local dealer in Alamogordo, NM told me the ball joints were ok and there is no problem. Apparently Dodge is not concerned that their vehicle's steering is very loose. My truck is also still under warranty, 7 year 50,000 mile coverage.

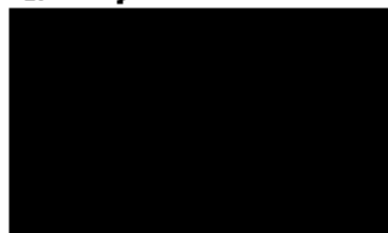
Is there anything I can do to actually get Dodge to take care of this common problem? The company, through the 800 number, 2 dealerships in New Jersey, and 1 in New Mexico all seems to not be responsive.

It is startling that, from my presumption, that manufacturers must be calculating replacement costs, vs. accidents from faulty equipment. Especially after the Ford Motor Co. situation with their Explorers.

I imagine that Ethics is not part of this corporation either.

Thank you very much, and if you can send me any information that could help, or current updates, that would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely



12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2004 9:45 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: 2001 Dodge Dakota 4x4 Quad cab

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2004 8:18 AM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: 2001 Dodge Dakota 4x4 Quad cab

Hello,

Do I need to send an e-mail to you or submit a problem report through the NHTSA WEB site? This is pertaining to the bad ball joint investigation you are running. I have had problems with my front end since I have had 10,000 mile or so on my truck. I would have to look through my paper work to get the exact mileage. To give you history on my truck, I have gone through a bad computer, cracking factory paint, a shorted interior fan switch, techs breaking wheel locks, and front end suspension problems. The front end originally was loose, when I took it in for that, the tech said there were missing bolts that they replaced with bolts from Ace Hardware. Then the front end started making a loud noise when making turns, so I asked them to look into the front end and they said they could not find anything, but greased some parts. The truck still made the noise, about 4 to 5 trips to service, they finally rebuilt the whole left front, with everything but ball joints, a new steering rack, and other parts. I moved in this period of time, and took the truck to a different dealer a couple cities away, and they replaced the ball joints. This took care of the problem for about a few weeks. I think the problem with the 2000 + Dakota quad cabs is that the front suspension is not designed for the extra weight that it carries over the standard or extra cab model. The torsion bars are the same, and I think that makes the front end actually bottom out against the bump stops. The quad cab is the only one of the models that came standard with Nitrogen shocks to try and compensate for some of the weight. The other thing that is common with trucks is that the new 6 x 114 bolt pattern will cause the brakes to warp unless torqued down hard. This puts more stress on the front end. Dodge needs to be told they need to redesign the front end to handle the weight. Please help out the 10's of 1000's of Dakota owners. Sorry for the rambling on.

Do you Yahoo!?

Yahoo! Photos: High-quality 4x6 digital prints for 25¢
http://photos.yahoo.com/ph/print_splash

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Monday, April 26, 2004 5:38 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: 1997 dodge dakota ball joints

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 25, 2004 7:54 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: 1997 dodge dakota ball joints

Dear Sir,

I am the original owner of a 1997 Dodge Dakota 4x4 with approximately 96,000 miles. I recently had new tires put on and was told that they could not align the front end because the ball joints were so bad that it was an emergency situation. I assumed this was just a sales gimmick, especially after they gave an estimate to fix it for almost \$700.00. I have always noticed strange noises and popping in the front end but assumed it was not a large concern. However, after doing a search on the net I found that there are many others with the same problems and that it is being investigated. This is how I obtained your e-mail address. Forgive me if I am not addressing the correct person or department. Please direct me on this situation with any advice. This would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your cooperation.

[REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Monday, April 26, 2004 5:39 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Engineering Analysis EA03-023

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 24, 2004 1:52 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: FW: Engineering Analysis EA03-023

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 22, 2004 1:46 PM
To: peter.kivett@nhtsa.dot.gov
Subject: Engineering Analysis EA03-023

I understand you are looking into problems with Dodge Trucks front suspension. I am not sure what good it will do, but please add my name to the list of dissatisfied Dodge owners. I have a 2000 Dodge Durango STL 4.7 V-8 with 78,000 miles. I have complained about front end noise since shortly after I bought it in 2000. Today I was informed I needed to replace the upper control arms, at a cost of over \$700 (including recommended front end alignment & tune-up \$1250). I have been driving for 40 years and average 30,000 miles a year. Most driving is highway. I have never had this type of problem with any vehicle. After all the TV reports and complaint letters I have seen I feel this is a design flaw. I am paying for the repairs and will save the parts if you need them for your study.

[REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Jordan, Michael
Sent: Monday, May 03, 2004 4:41 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: RE: Engineering Analysis EA03-023, Dodge Dakota Ball Joints

Yub yub.

-----Original Message-----

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Monday, May 03, 2004 4:40 PM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Engineering Analysis EA03-023, Dodge Dakota Ball Joints

thankx.....

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 03, 2004 3:53 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Engineering Analysis EA03-023, Dodge Dakota Ball Joints

Peter - obtained your email from the DodgeDakotas.com web site regarding your investigation into ball joints on the Dodge Dakota/Durango.

I have a 1999 Dodge Dakota 4x4 with 92,000 miles. Recently noticed a shimmy in the front suspension so I took it to my local Goodyear dealer to have the tires balanced. They have advised me the upper, lower and inner tie rods are worn. Estimate is \$1,282.19 for parts and labor. I have made an appointment for 04/07/04 to have the work performed at Goodyear.

If you would like any additional information, to help with your investigation, please let me know.

Thanks

Jordan, Michael

From: Kvett, Peter
Sent: Monday, May 10, 2004 9:07 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Dodge Dakota Ball Joint Issue

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, May 08, 2004 12:34 PM
To: Kvett, Peter
Subject: Dodge Dakota Ball Joint Issue

Hello,

I have experienced failure(s) of the ball joints on my 1988 Dodge Dakota. I feel this is an example of a poorly designed, unsafe vehicle. This failure caused an accident I believe. I use only synthetic lube, oils, etc and grease everything on schedule.
Thanks for your time,

[REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Monday, May 10, 2004 9:15 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Dodge Dakota ball joints

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2004 3:12 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Dodge Dakota ball joints

Mr. Kivett,

I own a 1999 Dodge Dakota 4x4 that I purchased new. Recently, I watched a news program regarding the premature wearing of Dodge ball joints (Durango and Dakota). My truck has 91,000 miles on it and I have not experienced any obvious symptom that the ball joints were going bad. However, I took my truck to a mechanic who told me the ball joints are severely worn.

I did an Internet search and found that the NHTSA is conducting an investigation - Engineering Analysis EA03-023. I would like to know how that research is going since my cost to replace all four ball joints will exceed \$1,200.

Thank you
[REDACTED]

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12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Klveit, Peter
Sent: Friday, May 14, 2004 9:42 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: ball joints..dodge dakota.

thankx Mike.....

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2004 7:37 PM
To: Klveit, Peter
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: ball joints..dodge dakota.

Hi Peter, My Question to you is to get the facts and truth on the ball joint issue on dodge Dakotas. I just went to my service tech today to pick my truck up after my Speed Sensor went(another soar subject)(Is this recalled?),and come to find out my upper ball joints are shot.

I am really concerned after reading all postings and seeing numerous television specials, including CBS',Dan Rather report.
Please respond as how to proceed and when is Chrysler going to fix this problem.

Thank you

[REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Jordan, Michael
Sent: Monday, May 17, 2004 11:39 AM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: RE: Dodge Dakota Ball Joints

For ODI Ref. No. 10071582 ("I am paying for the repairs and will save the parts if you need them for your study"), the consumer's contact information is:



I have attached a copy of his e-mail correspondence and a copy of the response I prepared, which was mailed on Thursday (05/13/04).

~Jordan

---Original Message---

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Monday, May 17, 2004 10:41 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Dodge Dakota Ball Joints

Mike

I would like to get the ball joints from that guy you called me about. I don't have his email anymore can you get that to me? I'll give him a call. Thankx Pete

---Original Message---

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Friday, May 14, 2004 7:52 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Dodge Dakota Ball Joints

Sir,

My 2001 Dodge Dakota Quad Cab with 35k miles has been diagnosed with bad ball joints. I understand that you are looking into a recal. Has this come about yet? Thank you.



12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Monday, May 17, 2004 3:59 PM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Dodge Dakota

thankx

—Original Message—

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 17, 2004 3:45 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Dodge Dakota

Is anything being done about the ball joint issue on the dodge Dakota, I have paid over \$500 so far on ball joints and was told I will have to do it again ? Is there any assistance on this issue.

[REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Wednesday, May 19, 2004 9:50 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Engineering Analysis EA03-023

We gotta do that again! Had a blast sorry I had to bolt early but it is a good thing I did BW Parkway was a mess and parking was impossible.

Here is another, thankx

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 18, 2004 7:33 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Engineering Analysis EA03-023

Greetings:

As you are probably aware, your email address has been published as a possible individual who is involved with analyzing the issue surrounding the premature failure upper and lower ball joints on Dodge Dakota and Durango vehicles. If this information is incorrect, please accept my apologies and perhaps you could forward this message on to the correct individual(s).

I am the owner of a 1998 Dodge Dakota pickup with 49,000 miles on the OD. I have been experiencing symptoms for quite some time now that I can only describe as "a loose sensation within the front suspension". It literally feels like the wheels are going to fall off. After reading the many complaints that have been posted on the web about this ball joint issue, I am understandably concerned about the dangers that may be involved with my own vehicle.

If my understanding is correct, the Chrysler Corporation, while aware of the complaints, is unconcerned about the severity since "there have been no reported deaths or significant injuries" resulting from this issue. I also understand that there may be one or more class action suits pending, but as of now no related safety recalls have been issued.

I am writing to you today to urge you to exercise any influence you have within NHTSA to expedite Engineering Analysis EA03-023, and upon determining -- as I am sure you will -- that there is significant reason to believe the stock ball joints pose a safety threat will take the necessary action to help vehicle owners resolve the situation.

Thank you in advance for your time and efforts,



Jordan, Michael

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, May 20, 2004 7:10 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Rutherford Durango

By email dated May 3, 2004, you advised [REDACTED] that the ball joint from our Durango was forwarded to VRTC, that all testing had been put on hold, and that you planned to start up again in the near future. Do you have any indication of when the testing may be done?

[REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, May 20, 2004 8:11 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: FW: ball joints..dodge dakota.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2004 9:18 PM
To: peter.kivett@nhtsa.dot.gov
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: ball joints..dodge dakota.

Hi Peter, My Question to you is to get the facts and truth on the ball joint issue on dodge Dakotas. I just went to my service tech today to pick my truck up after my Speed Sensor went(another scar subject)(is this recalled?),and come to find out my upper ball joints are shot.

I am really concerned after reading all postings and seeing numerous television specials, including CBS' Dan Rather report.
Please respond as how to proceed and when is Chrysler going to fix this problem.

Thank you

[REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, May 20, 2004 7:45 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Engineering Analysis EA03-023

Mr. Kivett,

I am writing with my concern for my 1999 Dodge Dakota pick-up. I have had to have the rotors replaced twice and now I am told that the ball joints are cracked. This vehicle is not taken off of paved roadways. It is not normal and highly unusual for these type admoralities to exist. I urge you to do a recall on these vehicles and make Dodge/Chrysler fixed their deficient parts on the Dakota.

Your considerations are very much appreciated.

[REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Wednesday, June 02, 2004 11:48 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Dodge Ball Joints

thankx Mike. When are we golfing again? Talk to Aaron and see if he has a weekend open.

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 01, 2004 2:35 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Dodge Ball Joints

Mr. Kivett,

I am the owner of a Dodge Dakota and a Dodge Durango. I have become concerned about the reports that I have seen about the ball joints failing in these vehicles. I occasionally hear popping noises from the front ends, which worries me greatly because my wife and children are in the vehicles daily. Please let me know the status of this investigation and the likelihood of a recall in the near future.

Thanks you,

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2004 10:49 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Dodge Dakota Ball Joints

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 22, 2004 7:45 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Dodge Dakota Ball Joints

Peter,

I own a 2000 Dodge Dakota Quad Cab. I am experiencing steering problems such as strange noises, excessive shaking and pulling to the right. I have 65,000 miles on my truck. I suspect my ball joints are shot. I understand there is an investigation in progress on the Dodge Dakota. Would you please let me know the status of this investigation. I am on the verge of replacing the ball joints myself and would like to know if this is the best course of action.

[REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Tuesday, July 06, 2004 9:45 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: 1999 Dodge Durango

---Original Message---

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 02, 2004 8:34 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: 1999 Dodge Durango

I would like to know how to file a complaint about the ball joints in this Vehicle, it has around 73000 miles and we have already replaced the transmission at 50000 and the intake manifold was replaced today. They are now telling me that the ball joints need to be replace which I hear is premature. Is there any idea on how long it is going to take to recall this problem, I see it all over the web?? Thanks for your help.

[REDACTED]

"I know God will not give me anything I can't handle, I just wish he didn't trust me so much" - Mother Teresa

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Monday, July 12, 2004 11:23 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: help with dodge dakota.

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 07, 2004 4:36 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: help with dodge dakota.

Hello,
I am the not so proud owner of a 1997 dodge dakota. Like thousands of other owners I am experiencing an array of defective front suspension problems. I have recently spoken to a rep at Daimler Chrysler who informed me that there is an investigation into this problem and that there might or might not be a recall. I saw your email address on a message board relating to this problem and thought I would write you an email. I was hoping you can give me more information regarding this terrible and dangerous problem. Or if you could assist me in getting daimler chrysler to pay for the cost of my repairs. I greatly appreciate your input.

[REDACTED]

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2004 9:46 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Upper ball joints, 2000 dodge dakota

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 14, 2004 4:31 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Upper ball joints, 2000 dodge dakota

Peter I got your name from a dakota website stating you are lead investigator on the ball joint issue. I was just wondering if you think anything is going to be done to resolve this poor design issue. My truck has the popping noise issue with it and do believe dodge should fix this. Is there any pressure the Government can put on dodge to fix this before someone gets hurt. Your response would be appreciated. Another note, I did file a complaint with you on this issue the ODI number is 10051116
thanks.

[REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2004 2:52 PM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Emailing: Upper Ball Joint 018, Upper Ball Joint 019, Upper Ball Joint 016, Upper Ball Joint 017

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2004 2:39 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: RE: Emailing: Upper Ball Joint 018, Upper Ball Joint 019, Upper Ball Joint 016, Upper Ball Joint 017

Peter,

Have there been any major developments in the investigation of upper ball joint failure on the Dodge Durangos? I visit the NHTSA website often for an update. Other than the response from DaimlerChrysler stating that they don't believe the situation creates a safety issue, I haven't found any new information in a while. Do you still believe there may be a recall? Is there any incremental information we can provide? We are still willing to help with the investigation in any way we can.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: Kivett, Peter [mailto:Peter.Kivett@nhtsa.dot.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2004 2:24 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Emailing: Upper Ball Joint 018, Upper Ball Joint 019, Upper Ball Joint 016, Upper Ball Joint 017

Thank you, very good pictures.
these will help. Pete

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2004 2:20 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Emailing: Upper Ball Joint 018, Upper Ball Joint 019, Upper Ball Joint 016, Upper Ball Joint 017

Your files are attached and ready to send with this message.

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2004 12:41 PM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: 2002 Dodge Dakota Front End Failure

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2004 3:40 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: 2002 Dodge Dakota Front End Failure

I was driving my 02 Dakota this morning (26K miles). Turning the vehicle to take a curve and it's like my steering was gone. Hit a guard rail, Thank God, no one was hurt and the truck only has some front bumper damage. I just had this truck in for complaints of a rattle, pop, and looseness in the front end. They replaced the steering shaft and didn't say anything about the ball joints, tie rod, or rack and pinion steering.

Is these problems that have been addressed over and over to Chrysler under investigation. If this dealer tells me everything is okay that I was at fault of the accident, I will take it to another dealer for a 2nd opinion. I still hear that pop when I make a sharp turn.

Thanks in advance for your help in this matter.

[REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Thursday, August 19, 2004 12:41 PM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: DAIMLER CHRYSLER recall on upper Ball Joints for Dodge Dakotas and Durango's

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 19, 2004 11:42 AM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: DAIMLER CHRYSLER recall on upper Ball Joints for Dodge Dakotas and Durango's

Peter,

Recently I've submitted a complaint with regard to my 1998 Durango. I am interested in knowing the status of this complaint and the possible class action lawsuit against Daimler Chrysler.

Regards,

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Wednesday, September 08, 2004 10:23 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Ball joints and rear end fluid change

---Original Message---

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, September 08, 2004 8:33 AM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Ball joints and rear end fluid change

Hi, I have a 2003 dodge dakota quad cab, Needed 1 balljoint replaced at 24,000 miles. I asked them to replace all of em ,cause you know they will all go bad before 70,000 miles. They said they will replace them as needed (or until my warrenty runs out). Also my rear limited slip differential fluid needing to be replaced at 12,500 miles is a joke. This seems to be a way to nurse the rear from chatter and other issues and to keep the thing alive. Most people never change the diff fluid. i change it on my other vehicles every 30,000. But I have been changing the fluid every 12,500. Thanks [REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Thursday, October 21, 2004 2:03 PM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Dodge Dakota Ball Joints

I have something posted on the Internet?

Pete

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 21, 2004 1:53 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Dodge Dakota Ball Joints

Dear Sir, I saw your email on a website about failed ball joints on the Dodge Dakota/Durango. I have a 1998 Dakota that I purchased new and have only put 38000 miles on it. This truck is babled as indicated by the low mileage. I have never been off-road and my mechanic has serviced the truck religiously. I just recently put new tires on the truck and my mechanic said I need to replace both the upper and lower ball joints. He indicated that Dodge is known for not putting heavy enough ball joints under the Dakota/Durango. Specifically when they offer the trucks with the 31x10.5x15 tires and 318 V8 motor. It is a much bigger tire and is offset more thus putting a strain on the front end. The engine obviously weighs more than the V6 and thus the smaller ball joints cannot hold up. I found this out by putting new tires on so I am lucky it wasn't while going down the road. But to the tune of around \$700.00 to fix a problem Dodge knows exists. Thank you for any help with this.

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Thursday, October 21, 2004 8:58 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Dodge Durango upper ball joints (TIS04-007283 DGD)

Mike how do I handle this? Can this lady receive one of your SPECIAL letters to calm her down? And this investigation has not been going on for two freaken years!

Pete

---Original Message---

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2004 1:58 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: FW: Dodge Durango upper ball joints (TIS04-007283 DGD)

Hello Peter:

The following e-mail was just logged in from our queue of several hundred requests received each month. She may have talked to you in the interim as some customers are referred to TIS, when another Office can provide the response they are seeking.

I will not refer her to you (unless you want me to). If you wish, I can send her the opening resume for EA03-023 and tell her she can retrieve the public file documents using Adobe Acrobat.

I will show this as closed on our Correspondence System, but will still send a reply if you notify that is your wish.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

---Original Message---

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 26, 2004 9:56 AM
To: TIS
Subject: Dodge Durango upper ball joints

What is the status of this investigation? The issue has dragged on for over 2 years now. Time to bring things to a head. Thank you, [REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Klveit, Peter
Sent: Monday, October 25, 2004 8:11 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: 2001 Dodge Dakota ball joints

thankx

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, October 23, 2004 10:13 AM
To: Klveit, Peter
Subject: 2001 Dodge Dakota ball joints

Dear sir,

I am writing to express a concern about the ball joints on my truck. It is a 2001, 4wd, quad cab with a 4.7. I just purchased this truck three weeks ago with 56000 miles on it from a local dealer. After driving it for a few weeks, I've noticed a clunk coming from the front end when driving over bumps. After investigating it myself, I've found the ball joints are shot. After further investigation, I have found that this is a common problem with Dakotas and Durangos. In most of my research I have heard rumors that there might possible be a recall coming for these problems. I was also told to report it to NHTSA so that my complaint would be heard. I realize this is a safety issue, but if there is a recall coming soon, I would rather Dodge pay the 13000 dollar bill as opposed to me. Any insight for upcoming decisions would be helpful.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Monday, October 25, 2004 8:22 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: 2001 dakota ball joints

thankx

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 22, 2004 12:51 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: 2001 dakota ball joints

Hello Peter, my name is [REDACTED] I live in Port Alberni, B.C Canada. I purchased my 2001Dakota 4X4 new in October 2001. I have had several ball joint replacements all covered on warranty. I have less than 45,000km on this truck and the first time the ball joints were replaced I had less than 30,000km. Who should I contact in Canada to voice my concerns on this matter?
Thanks for your time.

[REDACTED]

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Thursday, October 28, 2004 2:12 PM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Dodge Dakota Ball Joint Investigation

thankx

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 28, 2004 1:15 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Dodge Dakota Ball Joint Investigation

I got your e-mail address from another Dakota owner who said he'd been in contact with you re: the Dakota Ball Joints.

I'm sure you've heard stories similar to mine many times by now, but add my name to the list. I'm probably not as 'angered' by this as many, but it doesn't seem right that Dodge can make a subpar part, put it in the truck, and then expect the owners to foot the bill for repeated repairs. Here's my story:

I bought my brand new Dakota in June of 2002. Drove it off the lot with all of 15 miles on the odometer. I've put around 20k per year on it. It now has 48k.

At about 6k, I started noticing a 'scrunch' type sound in the front suspension whenever I pulled into my driveway. At first, I thought maybe it was a tire rub (the tires are pretty wide...), but no evidence of this. I kept listening for it as it got worse and worse (more and more constant), until around 24,000 when I finally had it checked. The dealer replaced both ball joints at no cost.

At around 30,000 or so, it started again. Again, same thing. Gradually got worse. It's got 48,000 on it now. It's not as bad as it was at 24,000, but I took it in for service.

I just got off the phone with the dealer. He's claiming 'they can't make it make the sound'. He's listed out a few things it 'might be' lubricating steering stops, and a couple of other things. We'll see if he's right...

Anyway, just wanted to add my name to the list of people with trouble with these Dakotas. It's an absolute shame - as nice of a truck as the Dakota is - that they're not better mechanically than they seem to be. They're scaring off a whole lot of potential buyers - people who bought them because of how nice they are, and now say they'll 'have to do something else next time' because of the trouble.

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Monday, November 01, 2004 9:07 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Dodge ball joint failure

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 28, 2004 7:34 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Dodge ball joint failure

Based upon info I found on the Internet you are a good contact to voice a complaint to about early ball joint failure on a 2003 Dodge Dakota. My car's front ball joint began squeaking at about 20,000 miles or earlier but I didn't realize the severity of the noise. At 40,000 I inspected the joint myself because the squeak was now a clunk and the noise was constant. When I took it to the dealer they said I had to replace both upper joints at a cost of almost \$600. Not having many options I did this. This is when I checked the Internet for recalls. It appears that lots of owners are complaining of this same problem. The dealer replaced only the ball joints. They drilled out the rivets and bolted the new units in. The new units only have a 12000 mile warrantee... no better than my originals. If this is going to be an ongoing issue I would say that these units are defective but yet there is no remedy to fix. Is it right that I can plan to spend 500 every 15 or 20000 miles? The dealer's attitude seemed to be that if the unit's failure caused an accident, Chrysler will deal with it. I had no recourse and being just 4000 miles out of warrantee they wanted nothing to do with it. My VIN number is 1D7HG32N[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Friday, November 05, 2004 9:26 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: dodge dakota

thankx

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, November 04, 2004 6:57 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: dodge dakota

Good afternoon Mr. Kivett. My name is michael and i was concerned about a noise i'm hearing from the front end of my 2000 2wd Dodge Dakota. Every time i hit a bump, I can hear a clunking noise and when i'm driving on the highway at speeds over 65mph the front end shakes as though it is unaligned or unbalanced. it also shakes when i apply the brakes when i am driving at speeds of 50 or higher. i have had the wheels balanced, the steering aligned, have replaced the brakes and rotors and i still get this movement. do you have any recommendations for my problem. thank you and take care,

[REDACTED]

Do you Yahoo!?
Check out the new Yahoo! Front Page.
www.yahoo.com

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Tuesday, November 23, 2004 11:35 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: DURANGO BALL JOINT

Please let this guy know we are preparing to send Chrysler a recall request letter.

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 23, 2004 10:18 AM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: DURANGO BALL JOINT

I OWN A 2003 DODGE DURANGO ON WHICH I HAVE REPLACED 1 BALL JOINT, STEERING RACK WITH TIE ROD END AND AM TAKING IT IN THIS WEEK FOR PROBABLY ANOTHER BALL JOINT. IS THERE A RECALL YET? IS THERE A PERSON OR AGENCY TO CONTACT OR IS THIS THE PLACE TO DO IT?

[REDACTED]

12/2/2004

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Tuesday, November 23, 2004 2:12 PM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Dodge Dekota Ball joints

thankx

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 23, 2004 2:08 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Dodge Dekota Ball joints

I received your name from the DodgeDakota.com. I just replaced my ball joints and tie rods on my 2000 Dakota. My tie rod actually broke as I was going to the store, luckily I was traveling slow enough to stay under control. I am tring to send a complaint to the NHTSA on line but I am having trouble.

I would like to know how the process is going and what I may do further.

Thank you

[REDACTED]

Jordan, Michael

From: Kivett, Peter
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2004 8:43 AM
To: Jordan, Michael
Subject: FW: Engineering Analysis EA03.023

thankx

—Original Message—

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 29, 2004 6:16 PM
To: Kivett, Peter
Subject: Engineering Analysis EA03.023

Dear Peter,

My name is James and i am an engineering student at Rutgers University. I have been taught that the role of an engineer is to optimize and perfect. Dodge has some perfecting to do. As an automobile lover, i take pride in working on my 99 Dodge Durango, but i am troubled by one simple problem. I was recently informed by a Dodge Dealership that my ball joints are no good anymore. My truck has 90,000 miles on it and everything else seems to be running fine. I have searched around for a reason for this problem, but all i can come up with is that it is a manufacturers defect. I have found web sites full of comments from durango owners, mainly 99 models, about their troubles with ball joints. For such an expensive problem to be occuring to frequently, this problem needs to be corrected by Dodge. I understand that you are part of the investigation for these ball joints, and i ask that you do you job well. Please email me back if you have any usefull information for me. Sincerely, James

Do you Yahoo!?

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