



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration**

# ODI RESUME

Investigation: DP05-003  
Prompted By: Defect Petition  
Date Opened: 08/08/2005  
Principal Investigator: Kyle Bowker  
Subject: Alleged Premature Tie Rod Failure

Manufacturer: Volkswagen of America, Inc.  
Products: 1999 Volkswagen Passat  
Population: 39,000 (Estimated)

Problem Description: The petitioner alleges that certain subject vehicles not included in recalls 99V-248 and 00V-414 are affected by the same defective tie rods.

## FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	10		
Crashes/Fires:	0		
Injury Incidents:	0		
# Injuries:	0		
Fatality Incidents:	0		
# Fatalities:	0		
Other*:	0		

\*Description Of Other:

Action: The petition will be evaluated for a grant or deny decision.

Engineer: Kyle M. Bowker KMB  
Div. Chief: Jeffrey L. Quandt  
Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

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Summary: On August 4, 2005, a petition was received by the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) requesting an investigation of allegedly defective tie rods in certain model year 1999 Volkswagen Passat vehicles not included in two previous safety-related recall campaigns. In September 1999, Volkswagen of America, Inc. (VW) notified the agency that an undetermined percentage of 1998-99 VW Passat and Audi A4, A6, and A8 vehicles contained a safety-related defect affecting the tie rods in the steering assembly. According to the manufacturer, it is possible that some tie rods may not seal properly which could allow moisture and dust particles to enter the swivel bearing mechanism, resulting in premature wear. The approximately 22,200 VW and 29,700 Audi vehicles affected by this recall were built from January 1998 through July 1998 and fell within a specific Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) range. In November 2000, VW chose to expand the scope of the recall after it determined that some potentially defective tie rods may have been installed in an additional 44,000 VW and 39,000 Audi vehicles built from August 1998 through April 1999. These recalls were not influenced by ODI. Instead, VW made an independent determination to conduct a recall after German vehicle inspection authorities notified it of "worn" tie rods and factory inspection of some "worn" tie rods revealed improper sealing.

According to a December 2004 report, the petitioner brought her 1999 Passat to an authorized VW dealer for an unrelated recall repair where she was notified by service personnel that, after 59,000 miles traveled, the tie rods "have too much play," and that the repairs would not be covered free of charge because her VIN was outside the recall range. In June 2005, after 65,400 miles traveled, the petitioner paid \$588.59 to replace worn inner and outer tie rods on both sides of the vehicle. The petition letter specifically requests that the scope of VW's recall be expanded to include the petitioner's vehicle and that she be reimbursed for the cost of the repairs.

KMB  
8-8-25