



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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: EA08-017
Date Opened: 8/28/2008 Date Closed: 7/01/2009
Principal Investigator: Chris Lash
Subject: Steering Intermediate Shaft Binding

Manufacturer: Kia Motors America, Inc.
Products: 2002-2004 Kia Sedona In Salt Belt States
Population: 62,634


Problem Description: Driver may experience hard steering, binding or noise while steering due to binding of the lower steering column universal joint.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	14	120	134
Crashes/Fires:	0	1	1
Injury Incidents:	0	1	1
# Injuries:	0	1	1
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	3,757	3,757

*Description of Other: Warranty Claims

Action: This Engineering Analysis is closed.

Engineer: Christopher Lash 
Div. Chief: Jeffrey Quandt
Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

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Summary: ODI's analysis of warranty data shows that the alleged defect has occurred at a relatively high frequency in salt-belt states (5.9 percent). However, the tests conducted by ODI and Kia have shown that the alleged defect has a minimal effect on steering efforts. In addition, ODI interviews of owners who experienced the alleged defect showed that in most cases the problem was preceded by months or years of noise or a gradual increase in steering efforts and was more of a nuisance concern.

There has been one allegation of a minor crash related to the alleged defect, involving a MY 2003 Kia Sedona with 59,900 miles. The vehicle had been checked twice in the previous nine months by a dealer for complaints of "stiff" steering and that the vehicle felt like it was intermittently losing power assist. The crash occurred as the driver was attempting to make a left turn while traveling at approximately 20 miles per hour and struck a vehicle parked on the right side of the street that the vehicle was turning into.

The crash resulted in minor injuries to the driver. After the crash, it was determined that the intermediate shaft was exhibiting some binding of the steering intermediate shaft bearings. While the absence of additional crashes or injuries does not mean that there is not a safety-related defect, there have been no reported additional crashes caused by the alleged defect in the past three years. The release of the technical service bulletin should assist service personal in diagnosing this potential problem long before it becomes potentially dangerous.

Accordingly, this investigation is closed. The closing of this investigation does not constitute a finding by NHTSA that a safety-related defect does not exist. The agency will continue to monitor complaints and other information relating to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles and take further action in the future if warranted.

For additional information regarding this engineering analysis refer to the EA08-017 closing report.

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