



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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE09-049
 Date Opened: 10/06/2009
 Principal Investigator: John Abbott
 Subject: Frame Corrosion

Date Closed: 01/26/2010

Manufacturer: Toyota Motor North America., Toyota Motor Corporation
 Products: MY 2000 and 2001 Toyota Tundra
 Population: 218,780

Problem Description: Sever corrosion of the frame rails and rear cross member.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	56	36	92
Crashes/Fires:	2	0	0
Injury Incidents:	1	0	1
# Injuries:	1	0	1
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	6	1	7

* Description of Other: Related to corrosion of the fuel tank mounting straps and frame cross-members that support the tank.

Action: Close investigation. Please see the Defect Information reports for Safety Recall 09V-444 for detailed information.

Engineer: John Abbott *JA*

Date: 01/26/2010

Div. Chief: D. Scott Yon

Date: 01/26/2010

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 01/26/2010

Summary: This investigation was opened based on 20 reports of model year (MY) 2000 and 2001 vehicles experiencing severe corrosion of the frame, resulting in either under-body mounted spare tire separation or rear brake failure. The failure report counts shown above are for MY 2000 and 2001 vehicles only.

By letter of November 16, 2009 Toyota has notified the agency that it will conduct a Safety Recall (09V-444) of approximately 110,000 model year (MY) 2000 through 2003 Tundra vehicles. The affected recalled vehicles were sold or are currently registered in the District of Columbia and the states of CT, DE, IL, IN, KY, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, VA, VT, WI, WV. Toyota alleges high amounts of "road salts" are used in these areas and excessive corrosion of the rear cross-member (to which the spare tire is mounted) can occur and cause the spare tire to separate from the vehicle and can also lead to rear brake failure.

Toyota stated: "Toyota has tentatively concluded that the root cause is a combination of factors, including usage in areas where road salt is applied, inadequate vehicle maintenance (i.e., not following the recommendations in the owner's manual), the design of the rear cross-member, and manufacturing issues." The design of the rear cross-member is such that it is open on the top side and susceptible to accumulation of dirt, water and road salt. Manufacturing issues of the rear cross-member related to the coating process also affect its corrosion resistance.

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Toyota also states that owners of MY 2000 through 2003 vehicles in states not covered by the recall will be notified on how to obtain the same inspection and repair as the recalled vehicles, free of charge. Further Toyota states: "Please note that while Toyota has not determined a defect exists in 2004 through 2006 MY Tundra vehicles, Toyota plans on initiating a field action in the near future to prevent future corrosion on those vehicles originally sold or currently registered in the affected region at no cost to the owner."

By letter of January 8, 2010 Toyota has notified the agency that it amended its Defect Information report for Safety Recall 09V-444 to include the "Fuel tank mounting system" (i.e., fuel tank support straps and fuel tank mounting cross-members) in the Safety Recall. Toyota states: "Toyota has not decided that the fuel tank mounting system in those vehicles contains a safety-related defect within the meaning of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Law. Rather, Toyota is taking this action at ODI's request and to avoid future disagreement with ODI with respect to this issue."

MY 2007 and newer Tundra vehicles are not included in any of Toyota's actions as the rear cross-member in those vehicles have been redesigned so that it is open on the bottom.

The actions taken by Toyota are sufficient to resolve the issues raised by this investigation. 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 in the subject vehicles. The agency will take further action if warranted by the circumstances.

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