



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 11-004

Date Opened: 01/28/2011

Investigator: John Abbott

Approver: Frank Borris

Subject: Frame/Body Structure Corrosion

Date Closed: 06/30/2011

Reviewer: Scott Yon

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: NISSAN NORTH AMERICA, INC.

Products: 1996-2004 Nissan Pathfinder & 1997-2003 Infiniti QX4

Population: 195,991

Problem Description: Severe corrosion of the driver's side front strut tower housing can cause separation of the housing panel. This can result in difficult or a complete loss of steering control, or in some cases can affect brake system components.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

| | ODI | Manufacturer | Total |
|----------------------------|-----|--------------|-------|
| Complaints: | 74 | 132 | 193** |
| Crashes/Fires: | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Injury Incidents: | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fatality Incidents: | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other*: | 0 | 0 | 0 |

***Description of Other:**

** Count indicates duplicate reports received by ODI and manufacturer.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: Close this investigation. Nissan will conduct safety recall 11V-244 for salt belt state vehicles. See the Defect Information Report for complete details.

Summary:

In their Defect Information Report (DIR) of April 20, 2011, Nissan North America, Inc. (Nissan) notified NHTSA that it would conduct a safety recall of certain 1996-2004 Nissan Pathfinder and 1997-2003 Infiniti QX4 vehicles to repair corrosion damage to the driver's side front strut tower.

The vehicles included in the recall are those that were originally sold, or are currently registered in salt belt states including Connecticut, Delaware, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia.

The DIR states in part, "...the strut housing may crack and pull away from the inner hood ledge assembly. This could lead to the strut housing panel separating and contacting the steering column lower shaft." Contact with the steering column lower shaft can cause steering difficulties and may require an increase in steering effort by the driver. If the steering column lower shaft completely fractured it would result in a total loss of steering control. In some cases, the strut housing panel can contact or affect adjacent brake system components. Complainants reported experiencing either steering or brake system issues, and in some cases, both.

Nissan dealer's will inspect the strut housing and, based on the level of corrosion found, make an assessment as to how to remedy the vehicle (see defect information report for additional details). Brake system components adjacent

to, and in the area of, the strut tower (i.e., brake master cylinder, left front brake line, ABS wire harness, etc.) will also be inspected.