



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 15-010
Date Opened: 03/24/2015
Investigator: Evan Frings
Approver: Jennifer Timian
Subject: Air Bag Clockspring Failure

Date Closed: 09/28/2015
Reviewer: Scott Yon

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: Volkswagen Group of America, Inc.
Products: MY 2010-2014 Various Volkswagen Models
Population: 415,825

Problem Description: Failure of the steering wheel clock spring/steering column control module (SCCM) potentially resulting in improper function of the driver air bag.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	29	719	741**
Crashes/Fires:	0	0	0
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0

** Total eliminates duplicates received by ODI and manufacturer.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: Close this investigation, see NHTSA recall 15V-483.

Summary:

The Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) opened an investigation based on consumer allegations of steering wheel clock spring/steering column control module (SCCM) failures in model year (MY) 2012 Volkswagen Passat and CC models. The SCCM is a module within the steering column that incorporates a spiral conductor (a ribbon cable) to electrically connect the steering wheel to the vehicle's electrical system while allowing for the turning of the steering wheel. Complainants alleged that the clock spring failed while driving and without warning. When the SCCM fails electrically, an air bag warning light is illuminated on the dash of the vehicle. If a vehicle with a failed SCCM were to be involved in a crash of sufficient severity to require deployment, the driver air bag may not deploy properly, or deploy at all.

As the result of an Information Request response from Volkswagen, ODI determined that the same SCCM was used in several vehicle models and MYs including: 2010-2013 CC, 2010-2013 Eos, 2011-2013 Golf, 2012-2013 Jetta and Jetta SportWagen, 2010 and 2012-2014 Passat and 2011-2014 Tiguan. ODI identified a total of 29 NHTSA complaints across all affected vehicles potentially indicating a failed SCCM. Drivers often indicated that an audible noise was heard from the steering column when the unit failed. Some drivers also mentioned that there was a noticeable but minor resistance to turning of the steering wheel after the failure with noises coming from the steering column. The average failure mileage is approximately 30,500 miles and failures often occur outside of the factory warranty. There were no reported crashes or injuries identified in either the NHTSA or Volkswagen data as a result of SCCM failures.

On July 30th, 2015 Volkswagen notified ODI that it would conduct a safety recall (15V-483) to remedy the SCCMs in 415,825 MY 2010-2014 vehicles. According to Volkswagen, the SCCM can become contaminated with human hair or similar fibers entering the unit between the steering wheel and steering column. Over time this can cause the electrical cable to tear and lose connection between the steering wheel and vehicle. Volkswagen will install a cover

that attaches over the SCCM to help prevent contaminants from entering the unit. A new SCCM designed to reduce outside contamination intrusion was previously introduced into new vehicle production during the 2014 model year; accordingly vehicles equipped with the new design SCCM are not included in the recall.

The recall action initiated by the manufacturer addresses the safety risks identified by the investigation. Accordingly, the investigation is closed.

The ODI reports cited above can be reviewed at <http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/owners/SearchSafetyIssues> under the following identification (ODI) numbers: 10760644, 10758777, 10748922, 110734168, 10731545, 10721424, 10717651, 10715305, 10713742, 10713139, 10712295, 10711945, 10704830, 10704221, 10702926, 10702212, 10701406, 10691906, 10683944, 10682136, 10672715, 10670517, 10669312, 10628549, 10607240, 10575783, 10561143, 10552113, 10397670.