



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: DP 18-002
Prompted by: Consumer Defect Petition
Date Opened: 08/17/2018
Investigator: Gregory Magno
Approver: Stephen Ridella
Subject: Frame corrosion
Date Closed: 03/18/2022
Reviewer: Gregory Magno

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: Toyota Motor Corporation
Products: 2002-2006 Toyota 4Runner
Population: 520,059

Problem Description: The petitioner experienced a front lower control arm failure while driving, resulting in a loss of vehicle control.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	15	0	0
Crashes/Fires:	2	0	0
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
Other*:	48	0	0

*Description of Other: Complaints alleging detachments of rear suspension links.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: This defect petition has been denied.

Summary:

On August 7, 2018, the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) received a defect petition from Mr. Gary Weinreich alleging premature frame corrosion failure in model year (MY) 2002 - 2006 Toyota 4Runner vehicles. The petitioner based his request upon a corrosion-related front suspension failure he experienced in his MY 2005 Toyota 4Runner, a class action lawsuit settlement involving other Toyota products, and other complaints of underbody corrosion in Toyota 4Runner vehicles that he found in NHTSA's online complaint database. The petitioner submitted a complaint to NHTSA documenting his experience (NHTSA ID 11098055). On August 17, 2018, ODI opened DP18-002 to evaluate the petitioner's request. ODI's evaluation included information provided by the petitioner regarding his vehicle, facts related to the class action lawsuit cited by the petitioner, and consumer complaint data received by NHTSA regarding underbody corrosion in third and fourth-generation Toyota 4Runner vehicles.

The undercarriage of the petitioner's vehicle exhibited severe corrosion damage indicative of seawater immersion. The vehicle's service history shows that concerns with underbody corrosion were first noted by a Toyota dealer in a multi-point vehicle inspection performed on April 28, 2011. The invoice for that inspection noted "severe and excessive amount of rust on the undercarriage and on the drive shaft transmission." Two years later, on October 21, 2013, another multi-point inspection by a Toyota dealer observed further progression of underbody corrosion damage, noting: "rust on shocks/struts and other components," "rust on exhaust system," "both splash shields severely rusted," and "undercarriage very rusty." On July 17, 2017, approximately 10 months prior to experiencing the suspension failure incident, an independent repair facility performing routine oil change and brake maintenance informed the Petitioner of a concern with "excessive frame corrosion" on his vehicle. The service history, severe general corrosion damage, failure age, and environment do not support the petitioner's allegation of premature corrosion failure.

ODI's analysis of NHTSA complaint data identified fifteen incidents of front lower control arm failure in fourth-

generation Toyota 4Runner sport utility vehicles. Two of the failures, including the petitioner's vehicle, involve vehicles operated in ocean front communities with continuous exposure to aerosolized marine salts and potential exposure to seawater immersion. The remaining thirteen failures all involved vehicles owned or previously registered in states with the greatest use of deicing salts to treat road surfaces in winter months ("Salt states"). On average, the front lower control arm failures occurred after 13.1 years in service in highly corrosive environments. The failure ages and environments do not support the petitioner's allegation of premature corrosion failure.

NHTSA is authorized to issue an order requiring notification and remedy of a defect if the Agency's investigation shows a defect in design, construction, or performance of a motor vehicle that presents an unreasonable risk to safety. 49 U.S.C. §§ 30102(a)(9), 30118. Since the information before the Agency is not indicative of a vehicle-based defect, it is unlikely that any investigation opened because of granting this petition would result in an order concerning the notification and remedy of a safety-related defect. Therefore, upon full consideration of the information presented in the petition and the potential risks to safety, the petition is denied. The denial of this petition does not foreclose the Agency from taking further action if warranted or the potential for a future finding that a safety-related defect exists based upon additional information the agency may receive.

A Federal Register notice further detailing NHTSA's reasons for denial of the petition will be forthcoming.

The fifteen ODI reports cited above pertaining to front lower control arm separation are available to review online at NHTSA.gov and are listed below:

10821201, 10881582, 11006598, 11054205, 11075098, 11083510, 11098055, 11138767, 11139972, 11152991, 11161846, 11315562, 11331773, 11417640, 11434037

The forty-eight ODI reports cited above pertaining to rear suspension link separation are available to review online at NHTSA.gov and are listed below:

10761118, 10783596, 10821400, 10822927, 10871438, 10872082, 10876022, 10882200, 10908749, 10927593, 10940217, 10945889, 10966115, 10985527, 11001548, 11114435, 11114755, 11150713, 11152112, 11155736, 11166649, 11170925, 11170964, 11185715, 11194987, 11205682, 11222814, 11233333, 11252243, 11287425, 11289695, 11289700, 11312163, 11316446, 11323054, 11331522, 11367090, 11389661, 11391057, 11394884, 11396197, 11406493, 11413582, 11416446, 11416732, 11424499, 11432719, 11442604