



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

400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

JUL 25 2003

FAXED
CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Mr. Kenneth Bush
Regulations Manager, Government Relations
American Suzuki Motor Corporation
3251 East Imperial Highway
Brea, CA 92822

NVS-214jry
PE03-033

Dear Mr. Bush:

The Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is conducting a Preliminary Evaluation (PE) concerning reports of recall remedy cam chain tensioner problems in the GSXR-series motorcycles subject to recall 99V-132. According to Suzuki's Defect Information Report filed on May 20, 1999, the original equipment tensioners were replaced because they:

"may not provide consistent tension to the cam chain in the engine [which] could cause abnormal engine sounds and could lead to cam chain breakage or other severe engine damage. This may cause sudden engine failure. Sudden engine failure while riding could cause rear wheel lockup, disturbing the rider's ability to control the motorcycle, and could cause a crash without prior warning."

After receiving a consumer complaint (enclosed) regarding alleged failure of the recall remedy tensioners, ODI contacted Suzuki and was told that the company had approximately 104 warranty claims related to remedy tensioner replacement. To assess whether these reports/warranty claims are, like those that preceded the original recall, a precursor to cam chain failure, we have opened this RQ and request the following information. Unless otherwise stated in the text, the following definitions apply to this information request:

- **Suzuki**: American Suzuki Motor Corporation, its parent company, and all of its divisions, dealers, subsidiaries, and affiliated enterprises. The term also includes all headquarters, regional, zone, or other offices of Suzuki Motor Corporation, or any of its divisions, subsidiaries, and affiliated enterprises, all officers, employees, agents, contractors, and consultants of Suzuki Motor Corporation, or any of its divisions, subsidiaries, or affiliated enterprises, and all records or files



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888-DASH-2-DOT
888-327-4298

maintained by the company either in hard copy form or in electronic storage media.

- **Subject vehicles:** all Suzuki motorcycles which have had service related to recall 99V-132.
- **Subject component(s):** cam chain tensioner and guide included in "Tension Adjuster Recall Kit" service part nos. 99103-11143 and 99103-11144.
- **Alleged defect:** Cam chain noise and/or breakage occurring after subject component installation.

The submitted information is to include, but not be limited to, all written reports or documents; transcriptions, notes, or other documentation of oral communications and telephone calls; and information contained in electronic or other storage media. For any oral communication, identify the date on which the communication took place and the names, positions, and employers of the parties involved, and relate the substance or provide a memorandum or transcript (if one is available) of the communication. If Suzuki cannot respond to any specific item, please state the reason why it is unable to do so. If Suzuki claims that any information or material responsive to the following items need not be divulged to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) because it is privileged or the work product of an attorney, state the nature of that information or material and identify any document in which it is found by date, subject or title, name and position of the person from, and the person to, whom it was sent, and the name and position of any other recipient. You must also describe any such privilege that you claim, and explain why you believe it applies.

In order for my staff to evaluate the alleged defect, certain information is required. Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30166, please provide numbered responses to the following questions. Please repeat the applicable question verbatim above each of your responses and include explanations of all codes and abbreviations used in each of your responses.

1. State the number and provide copies of all of the following information. This should include all information in Suzuki's possession or control, or of which it is otherwise aware, which relates or potentially relates to the alleged defect and/or the reports enclosed with this letter.
 - a. owner complaints;
 - b. repair shop reports;
 - c. field reports;
 - d. crash reports;
 - e. subrogation claims;
 - f. lawsuits; and
 - g. third-party arbitration proceedings where Suzuki is a party to the arbitration.

Please organize the documents responsive to this request by category (i.e., "a" through "g") and claim date. If not contained in the documents for each claim, please provide the incident date, the owner name, owner address, owner phone number, dealer location, vehicle identification number, build date, vehicle in-service date, repair date, repair mileage, repair order number, part numbers of subject components replaced, model, model year, and the current status of Suzuki's response to the report/incident.

For "d," identify all crashes by date, location, and names of parties involved. For "e," identify all subrogation claims and lawsuits by caption, court, and docket number. Provide a separate analysis and description of each item "e" through "g" identifying the vehicle (by model year, build date, and VIN) and the vehicle owner (by name, address, and telephone number). Include all police reports known to Suzuki. Clearly describe the sequence of events leading up to any accident(s), the approximate vehicle speed, approximate vehicle mileage, and any personal injuries, vehicle damage, or property damage that may have occurred.

Provide all related material and information even if it has not been verified by Suzuki. Indicate if no information exists for any category.

2. Furnish copies of all service or technical bulletins, advisories, or other communications to dealers, zone offices, or field offices pertaining to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles or to any fuel o-rings or parts relating to fuel tank assemblies in the subject vehicles. Briefly explain the purpose of each of these documents. If no such documents or communications have been issued, so state.
3. Identify and describe all significant modifications or changes made to a subject component by or on behalf of Suzuki in its manufacture (including quality control), design, and/or material composition. Please include the following information for each such modification or change:
 - a. The component name, the original part number, the modified part number, and the approximate date on which the modification or change was incorporated into production;
 - b. a description of the modification or change;
 - c. the reason for the modification or change; and
 - d. separately, the number of subject components sold before and after the modification.
4. Separately respond to the following warranty-related inquiries:
 - a. State the warranty terms as they apply to the fuel tank assembly in the subject vehicles by model and model year.
 - b. State the number of warranty claims, including extended warranty claims, requests for warranty or "goodwill," or other types of adjustments received by Suzuki which relate or potentially relate to the alleged defect. Order this information by calendar month and year and include the part name, part number, labor operation number, problem code, model, model year, vehicle identification number and dealer

identification number. If there are over 100 records, include the same data in a separate enclosure, replacing the calendar month and year by the build date (month and year). All abbreviations must be well defined.

5. The following relate to 99V-132:

- a. state the number of cam chain noise complaints of which Suzuki was aware at the time it decided to conduct this recall.
- b. Identify, by VIN, build date, tensioner type (i.e., OEM or replacement part), and failure mileage, all reports alleging cam chain breakage on Myr 1999 GSXR-750 and -600 series motorcycles of which Suzuki was aware at the time it decided to conduct this recall.

6. Furnish Suzuki's opinion regarding the possibility that a failure of the remedy tensioner (including those that initially result in chain noise) may result in chain breakage. Compare and contrast the failure history involving the subject component with that observed by Suzuki prior to launching 99V-132.

7. State the date that Suzuki ceased collecting information for use in responding to this Information Request. If more than one date applies, please provide the date for each information type (e.g., vehicle population, owner complaints, warranty, etc.)

Your response to this letter, in duplicate, must be submitted to this office by September 5, 2003. If you find that you are unable to provide all of the information requested within the time allotted, you must request an extension from Mr. Bob Young not later than five days from the due date. If you are unable to provide all of the information requested by the original deadline, you must submit a partial response by that date with whatever information you then have available, even if you have received an extension.

This letter is being sent to your company pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30166, which authorizes NHTSA to conduct any investigation that may be necessary to enforce Chapter 301 of Title 49, U.S. Code. Your failure to respond promptly and fully to this letter could subject Suzuki to civil penalties pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30165 or lead to an action for injunctive relief pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30163.

If you consider any portion of your response to be confidential information, include that material in a separate envelope marked "CONFIDENTIAL." In addition, you must submit a copy of all such material to the Office of Chief Counsel (NCC-30), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590, and comply with all other requirements for the submission of confidential business information stated in 49 CFR Part 512.

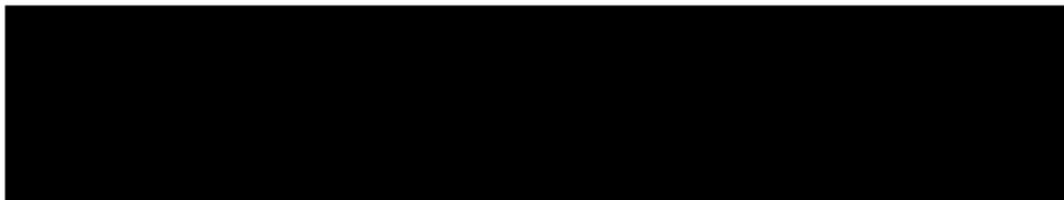
If you have any technical questions concerning this matter, please contact Mr. Young at (202) 366-4806.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By

Richard Boyd, Chief
MHD Branch
Office of Defects Investigation
Safety Assurance

Enclosures: 2 Owner Complaints



Suzuki Cam Chain Tension Adjuster Information

Name :

Address

Boardman, Ohio 44512

Work #

Home #

Cell #

17 digit VIN # JS1GR7DA6X2100452

Year & Model 1999 Suzuki GSXR 750X

Component in question Cam chain tensioner

Description of complaint to include number of failures, injury(ies)

- I received a recall notice that there was a problem with the bike.
- I went to the dealer and asked them what the recall was about.
- They said the bike may have a defective cam chain tensioner. If it fails, the timing chain may slip and cause the cams to lose their timing. Serious engine damage may occur.
- I parked the bike until the parts were available.
- There was about a 2 month gap between the issue of the recall notice to the time the parts were available.
- When the parts were available, the dealer completed the work ASAP.

- After some time had passed, the motor began to make excessive noise.
- The noise was not constant. It came and went a few times. The noise happened on deceleration.
- The noise sounded similar to small diesel motor.
- I assumed it was the cam chain tensioner.
- Due to the timing of purchasing a new motorcycle, I did not have the bike repaired. I traded it in on a new model.
- I assume that the dealer (Penn Ohio Motorsports) fixed the problem before they sold it to the new owner.
- The new owner has experienced no problems with the cam chain tensioner.

Where bike is being serviced and phone # (not required but helpful)

Penn Ohio Motorsports Phone #724 982 0330

Corrective actions taken by owner: have aftermarket parts been used in place of original equipment? Were there any out of pocket expenses?

NO aftermarket parts were installed. OEM parts were used the first time the CCT was replaced.

There were some costs involved in transporting the bike to the dealer. I do not have an exact amount.

There was some amount of frustration in parking a *NEW* bike for 2 months during our very short riding season.