

Porsche 911, Viper Probed For Safety Problems

The Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — U.S. safety regulators are investigating coolant leaks in Porsche 911 sports cars that could cause roadway spills and send vehicles careening out of control.

The probe, announced Tuesday by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, affects about 10,000 models with the GT1 engine from the 2001 through 2007 model years.

The agency said in documents posted on its website that a hose fitting can fail and cause rapid coolant leaks without warning. The coolant can cover the road and cause drivers to lose control of their cars.

The agency says it has 10 complaints of coolant leaks. One driver said a leak caused a 911 to lose rear tire traction, sending the car into a spin and off the road. The driver wrote in a complaint to NHTSA that it was fortunate that the car didn't hit anything, and that the coolant spill didn't affect other drivers.

"My research indicates that this is a common, systemic problem with this model engine and appears to be a dangerous defect in the engine construction," the complaint said.

Investigators will determine if the problem has caused any injuries and if it's bad enough to cause a recall.

Porsche says it just learned of the investigation and is cooperating with NHTSA.

DETROIT (AP) — U.S. auto safety regulators are investigating complaints that a rear suspension part can fail on the iconic Dodge Viper muscle car.

The investigation disclosed Tuesday by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration covers about 2,500 Vipers from the 2005 and 2006 model years.

The safety agency says a rear suspension connector could break while the car is moving, causing drivers to lose control. NHTSA has two complaints of crashes and one injury caused by the problem.

Investigators will check to see if the problem is bad enough to cause a recall, but so far none has been issued.

In one complaint to NHTSA, a doctor in Arkansas said he was driving his 2006 Viper in December when he lost traction on the left side and went into a slide. The car went airborne and up an embankment before stopping in a wooded area, said the

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complaint, filed on Dec. 24.

The doctor, who was not identified in the complaint, wrote that he was wearing his seat belt and suffered lower back injuries. A mechanic who inspected the Viper concluded that a steering knuckle separated from the right rear wheel, the complaint said.

Chrysler said it is cooperating in the investigation and that the Viper meets all federal safety standards. Spokesman Eric Mayne said any Viper owners with concerns should contact a dealer.

The low-riding, aggressive looking Viper comes with a 500 horsepower, 10-cylinder engine. A 2006 model can still sell for more than \$60,000.

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