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Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p430620)

by **WayneC** on November 24th, 2008, 5:40 pm

Bob

There is one known instance of cracking being found during maintenance and that was in the UK

Link below

<http://www.f650.co.uk/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=6054>
(<http://www.f650.co.uk/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=6054>)

Attempts to contact the owner failed. He stopped posting in april 2007, 1 month after the post above

I can say a metallurgy report indicates the cracking starts from the inside

My guess is it would take some fine down the hole camera's to pick it up

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p431247)

by **joyride** on November 30th, 2008, 2:38 pm

a little bit more on the topic.....and some new photos

[http://www.advrider.com/forums/showthre ... 785&page=5](http://www.advrider.com/forums/showthre...785&page=5)
(<http://www.advrider.com/forums/showthread.php?t=393785&page=5>)

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p437470)

by **ThorH** on February 4th, 2009, 6:51 pm

Update from HUBB:

<http://www.horizonsunlimited.com/hubb/which-bike/has-anybody-ever-seen-failure>

([http://www.horizonsunlimited.com/hubb/which-bike/has-anybody-ever-seen-failure-38514-](http://www.horizonsunlimited.com/hubb/which-bike/has-anybody-ever-seen-failure-38514-WayneC)

WayneC:

We have received confirmation of posts and articles concerning the axle mount failures

Jim Tussey from the US has advised he was seriously injured in 2004 and had a metallurgy report done on the failed RHS fork leg at the time, it indicated metal fatigue. The machine had only 1400 miles on it at the time. Jim is a mechanical Engineer so is well qualified to comment.

<http://www.horizonsunlimited.com/hub...4-4#post213501>

(<http://www.horizonsunlimited.com/hub...4-4#post213501>)

A UK rider who posted to the UK F650 forum of finding cracking around the RHS axle mount in 2007 has confirmed in an email the content of his post

BMW F650 (UK and Ireland) :: View topic - Any known fork recalls on F650 GS's ??

In addition to the above, in Australia the proprietor of an Insurance Assessment Co has advised he has assessed "1/2 a dozen" early F650GS machines and all had RHS axle mount failures. He described precisely the failures as per all of the pic's seen online to date. However the causes of the accidents are unknown.

It seems with the information now coming to light that the failures are more widespread than initially believed.

RWolf01:

I made some calls and the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Office of Defect Investigation is very interested in this sort of problem.

Unfortunately, they have only received one documented report of a problem for all F650s from model year 1999 to 2004.

Please ask anyone who has personally had one of these fork failures to visit IVOQ - File a Complaint and file a complaint. It only takes 5-10 minutes, and you do NOT need to live in the United States to report a problem.

If you file a complaint, please email the complaint number to me at f650forks@earthlink.net (<mailto:f650forks@earthlink.net>). As a German engineer who owns an '01 GS (with front wheel still attached) I'm more than a little pissed off about how BMW is handling this. I'm willing to spend some time pestering the NHTSA into taking action, but it would be a lot easier for me if there were 4-5 legitimate complaints filed.

Feel free to forward or repost this to other forums.

Once the NHTSA does an investigation, we can get the report released via a Freedom Of Information Act request. Then, if there is not a recall, at least we'll have a straight answer on why they think one isn't necessary.

(I tried getting a straight answer out of BMW Customer Service, but it was hopeless)

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p445916)

by **cdnabn49** on April 12th, 2009, 2:52 pm

<http://www.advrider.com/forums/showthread.php?p=9542016#post9542016>

[\(http://www.advrider.com/forums/showthread.php?p=9542016#post9542016\)](http://www.advrider.com/forums/showthread.php?p=9542016#post9542016)

Sorry to flog the horse...

here's mine... no design flaw... right...

damage close up... what you can't see is the lower triple tree twisted and bent so it wobbles on a flat surface... cockpit/fairing totaled... the rear sub-frame also bent and twisted... handle bars bent and twisted... [over \\$2,500 in parts damaged and replaced thanks to eBay and some lucky finds otherwise it would have been totally written off... \\$4G + of estimated damage and shop fee's... catastrophic mistake on casting.](#)

Fork close up

Fork Markings

rebuilt

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p445922)

by **grandevox** on April 12th, 2009, 3:55 pm

So, all of you guys and gals that have had this happen have reported it to the NHTSA, right? Too many of these occurring to have it be a one off fluke. If what I see is really happening there needs to be a recall on all the bikes with the older style fork lowers.

I am thinking that I ought to bilke the bullet and replace the fork sliders myself to evil spirit proof my bike!

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p446722)

by **NothingClever** on April 18th, 2009, 4:13 am

Wow....cast forks on a bike purported to be a dual sport.....I'd forgotten.

I guess folks won't be so quick to frown on Flash when he periodically fumes about BMW's decisions over the past 10 years to staff their marketing department with talented worker bees more than their engineer department.

All bikes have problems but I'd much rather worry about water pump failures or niggling cam chain tensioners than catastrophic failures like this.

I wish you guys the best of luck with your bikes and hope they meet your expectations.

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p446728)

by **Thumper** on April 18th, 2009, 5:30 am

So NC hows that 610 you are said to have....bet it's sweeeeeet

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p446748)

by **damalden** on April 18th, 2009, 9:33 am

*NothingClever wrote:*Wow....cast forks on a bike purported to be a dual sport.....I'd forgotten.

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who's Flash?

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p451242)

by **WayneC** on May 29th, 2009, 12:51 am

An enterprising US F650GS owner Ralph Wolfe has managed to force the NHTSA to open a formal investigation into the fork failures and BMW has now been asked to "please explain"

The documents associated with the investigation including the information request to BMW are available at their web site

[http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/probl ... search.cfm](http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/probl...search.cfm)
(<http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/defect/defectsearch.cfm>)

Enter case No PE09026, this will give you a list of documents associated with the investigation. At this stage there are 2 documents, the formal investigation opening and the request to BMW

It is in every owner's best interest if anyone has any information about any failure in any circumstance to on pass the information to the US

Finally we may get the true story of how and why a percentage of the F650 forks are failing

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p451250)

by **grandevox** on May 29th, 2009, 1:42 am

This is good, and none too soon.

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p451336)

by **haakon** on May 29th, 2009, 4:07 pm

And none too soon!! 1+++++

Lets pray everyone that had this happen will add to the list at NTHSA with a good description and maybe pictures- (no general "whining")-

It **must** to be facts and nothing else!!

Preferably documented facts too... like insurance or police documents

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p451479)

by **bigb** on May 30th, 2009, 4:53 pm

*haakon wrote:*And none too soon!! 1++++

Lets pray everyone that had this happen will add to the list at NTHSA with a good description and maybe pictures- (no general "whining")-

It **must** to be facts and nothing else!!

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Good point. But I don't see how it can happen, or it would have with the supposed unsurmountable evidence.

1. Off road warranties do not exist, and any that did pay were charity that SS Bmw did not catch.
2. A 20' or 30' jump is unreasonable force whether competition or not. And that includes equivalent forces like multiple potholes at high mph (>40).
3. Due to centralized cylinder casting, it would be rational stress cracks start from the inside. Additionally, where the forces would start, the axle, the outside would be the greatest leveraged forces. Furthermore, the stresses should happen just above the axle, away from the strength bends and curves nearest to the axle in the near weakest part of the metal. Amazing, that's exactly where couple seen are located at. And yes, cast alloy does have limits.
4. True, the cast part of the fork nearest the forces for off-road riding is not as robust as the new upside down forks: thus the change. But this has been accepted in more than the last hundred years, and off road riders crack their front ends up routinely. So now a BMW rider changes all of this history, negates the forces (they can prove) did not exceed the limit, and sues the 6th largest motorcycle company based on a Jap company that supplies Honda?

Facts indeed.

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p451505)

by **Dan Neelands** on May 31st, 2009, 2:30 am

My position is far less analytic. BMW saw fit to increase the material in the area in question. I want to know if the decision making process should have lead to improved hardware for those already on the road.

Dan

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p451553)

by **haakon** on May 31st, 2009, 12:38 pm

The GS and "more so" the GS Dakar WAS sold as "dual sport" bikes. Made for road and AND offroad use.

Not as competition offroad bikes, no way so. But still!!

The marketing mostly focused on the dual sports use.

I had more than a few invitations to attend paid offroad training on the GS.... and the videos and description all showed it was MADE to be used in the terrain.

The invitations came from BMW!!

I am ONLY guessing now- and sure may be all wrong!

1: BMW designed the forks in detail and had fork manufacturers "fight" for the contract.

2: BMW did NOT design the forks but described the USE of them and (hopefully) described the stress the forks could normally be subject to... and Showa designed the forks to those specs.

3: BMW just ordered some forks from a design Showa already had- with some modifications.

I could go on and on, but bottom line is:

BMW fitted the forks to our bikes!!!

(and they HAD to know the limitations of the forks they fitted)... AND accepted them.

I did NOT buy a Showa fork, I bought a BMW motorcycle I was "mislead" to think was a dual sports.

My LAST input in this "discussion":

I said what I did because its in everyones interest no one is killed or badly injured because of this design "flaw".

I AM in the market to get a set of the modified ones... bottom slider.

They are just so damn expensive!!!

So expensive I can as well look for another fork altogether.... YES- I would be real happy to have a Showa!!!!- but a Showa made for the use my bike is ment for and NOT just suddenly fall apart when I am in traffic!!

((A friend of mine had his rear wheel FALL OFF in a curve.... due to faulty design or material or... (a road only bike- made in USA) He got all costs covered and no questions asked at all... and a "bonus")

His bike was NOT the first the wheel fell off, but because he was not the first owner and the previous owners did not forward the recall notifications to my friend he had a scary ride

bigb wrote:

*haakon wrote:*And none too soon!! 1+++++

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p451575)

by **Richard #230** on June 1st, 2009, 1:09 am

In the June issue of Friction Zone, in their Safety Recalls section on page 8, is a recall notice for 237 KTM 2009 Duke and SMC motorcycles. The recall is for their front forks which could develop cracks that could result in the front fork inner tube separating from the axle clamp. The cause of the defect involves improper heat treatment of the front fork inner tubes by the manufacturer. Failure of this component could lead to loss of control, a crash and possibly injury or death to the rider. (ID# 09V-134).

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