

**Ryan Sorgnard**

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May 21, 2019

**Subaru of America, Inc.**

One Subaru Drive  
P.O. Box 9103  
Camden, NJ 08101  
Attn: Customer/Retailer Service

To Whom It May Concern,

My wife and I have recently been treated poorly by one of your authorized Subaru service locations to the extent that I would like to file a formal complaint.

Our 2012 Outback passenger-side “rocker molding” has been very weak since nearly the beginning of ownership. Eventually the plastic clips on the molding failed.

My wife was told it was probably due to weight put on it (i.e. our fault) and that the cost to replace the clips was \$200. She was not offered alternative options (eg. molding replacement). We paid the \$200 (May 2, 2019) hoping the molding would be returned to original condition & strength. However, it was not and immediately came loose that same day as if the repair was never done.

After returning to the service center (at great inconvenience to our family - we have 2 small children) my wife was told the entire rocker molding needs to be replaced in order to resolve the issue (as I said, this service option was not originally offered). Interestingly, the service advisor said this new repair would cost \$176 (less than the clip repair!).

At this point, my wife felt the initial repair did not address the issue and simply asked for a refund rather than further inconveniencing our family with return trips to the service center.

We spoke to Abel Oberbeck, Parts & Service Director, at Subaru of Portland, who denied our refund. He also continued to imply fault in us, the customer with the phrases, *“Certainly sorry to hear you are so upset about your*

*experience” and “Upon your return nearly a month after the initial repair.”*

These are direct quotes from one of his communications. I’ve copied the entire text below for your reference. Typically, customer experience is greatly diminished by a company when its representatives put the blame on its customers!

Additionally, Abel goes on to exhaustively describe the service pricing and communication breakdown during our initial and subsequent visits rather than simply issue a refund. It seems like pride rather than customer empathy for our inconvenience and dissatisfaction.

Despite his pride, however, he admits failure in two areas, his service and your product:

- *“The biggest problem I can identify here is ineffective communication by my staff with you, and I certainly apologize for that.”*
- *“It is admittedly a poor design in my opinion, and I can certainly understand how this can happen especially with little ones.”*

Despite his lengthy justification for the poor service experience we received at his shop, I do not follow his reasoning that we don’t deserve a refund for our inconvenience and a repair that was not properly done. Furthermore, he continues to imply we are the reason for part failure even though he admits to poor part design!

**Overall, my perception of Subaru service is highly diminished from this experience, and my faith in your overall customer service as well as your product is lost due to this experience.**

I’m not asking for much, simply please return my money to me.

Sincerely,

**Ryan Sorgnard**

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**Original communication with Abel Oberbeck, Parts & Service  
Director, at Subaru of Portland (below)**

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**Dawn  
Sorgnard**

May 14,  
2019,  
1:10 PM  
(7 days  
ago)

Hello Abel,

I came into the shop on Thursday, May 2nd to have your technicians to look at a recent service that was performed on our outback. I had come in a few weeks before to have the airbag recall fixed, a front light changed and to have the sidebar repaired. It had come off the car due to the clips breaking and falling out of the holes.

When I spoke to the original service person (older gentleman), he said it would cost 200 to replace the clips and refit the bar to the car. When we received the car it looked fine but on further inspection the side bar was still loose and seemed to be coming loose and pulling away from the car. I called to have the car brought back in and to have your technicians look at it. I was told that it was not something that could be repaired fully without replacing the whole thing. Your service person said that it would cost 176.00 to replace the side bar and he would even give me a discount on that for 126.00. When I came to pick up the car, you sat down with me and my frustration and went through your notes and told me that you were not happy to hear about our service and you would like to help make it better. I told you that I wanted my \$200 refunded to me. At the time, I was in a hurry to leave

town and had two small impatient children waiting for us to leave.

My first question is why was I not given the option to replace the sidebar in the first place. And why is it that I paid 200 for a incomplete repair when I could have paid 176.00 for a brand new one? If it were to cost more than 176.00 to replace the whole thing, I was not told that. So, in effect your company has STOLEN \$200 dollars from me. And the repair is still not complete as the clips are starting to fall off again. Regardless of how careful we are with our children climbing in and out of the car. Subaru used to carry quality made cars with quality service, however in recent years we have experienced nothing but the opposite, especially from your service center.

If you want to "make it better", then please refund my \$200 and remove us from your customer list. We will NOT be returning and I will be sure to mail the Better Business Service with a complaint and splash social media with a list of complaints that we have encountered in the past.

Thank you for your time!

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Abel Oberbeck <aoberbeck@subaruofportland.com>

Date: Wed, May 15, 2019, 12:32 PM

Subject: Re: 2012 Subaru Outback Side Board Complaint

To: Dawn Sorgnard <stgmanager@gmail.com>

Certainly sorry to hear you are so upset about your experience. Let me try to answer some of the questions you posed. From my understanding of what transpired, you initially came in seeking repair on a rocker molding which was loose due to the mounting clips having been broken. Upon technician inspection it was verified that in fact the clips were broken however there was no damage to the actual molding itself and therefore no justification for the advisor to seek a replacement part price for the entire molding which would presumably be significantly more expensive to replace than strictly the removal and reinstall labor and clip/s replacement. Upon your return nearly a month after the initial repair, it was discovered that now the mounting points on the actual molding piece itself had been broken and require replacement of the entire piece in order to repair. This is when it came to surface that in fact it was only approximately \$100 more to replace the entire molding than it was to replace the initial clips. If there had been a reason for him to seek a price quote for the molding in the first place, he certainly would have and he would have identified the logical recommendation of replacing the entire piece, but I can tell you that \$100 makes a big difference to a lot of folks, and the less expensive option is generally chosen. The biggest problem I can identify here is ineffective communication by my staff with you, and I certainly apologize for that. The advisor explained to me that in light of the recent repair, he offered to discount the labor down to make the price quote \$176, (without explaining to you he had taken the previous repair into account already and started by presenting you a discounted rate), and then upon further conversation with you and sensing your frustration, tried to appease you by offering yet another discount. I can only speculate through previous experience, but I'm assuming that the molding was broken via someone stepping on the non-weight bearing, strictly cosmetic plastic piece the second time you came in, just as they did in they did in the 1st. It is admittedly a poor design in my

opinion, and I can certainly understand how this can happen especially with little ones. All of that being said, I think it is an extremely harsh and unfair accusation to state that we "stole" from you, as there were clearly services rendered that you sought out and authorized prior to completion, and I find your threats to be equally unfair as no one at Subaru of Portland, including myself, have ever shied away from trying to help you through the situation, and in fact you were the one who walked out of the only conversation about this that we have ever engaged in about this due to your time constraints. I will offer to replace the molding as a onetime goodwill gesture at no cost to you, and refund you the difference between the \$176 quoted and what you paid initially. Again, I certainly apologize for the poor communication and any frustration the situation has caused and hope we come to terms on an agreement. Please let me know if you have any further questions or if you would like to proceed with setting up the repair.

Thank you,

Abel Oberbeck

Parts and Service Director

Subaru of Portland

503.736.1466

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**Ryan**  
**Sorgnard**  
**<ryan@cored3**  
**sign.com>**

May 15,  
2019,  
1:05 PM  
(6 days  
ago)

Hi Abel,

I just left you a message...not sure how frequently you check your voicemail so I wanted to quickly address this.

I don't think this should be that difficult to resolve and I hope you have the power to simply refund our money. All other things aside, the crux of the matter is we paid for a repair job that was not done to our satisfaction. We simply want a refund as the condition of the side rail is no different than when we brought it in.

I hope you can accommodate this request rather than asking our family to be inconvenienced by further repairs and appointments for something that should have been done right in the first place.

Thank you,

Ryan Sorgnard