2003 Porsche Boxster at 95,000 mi

WP0CA29843U123456

MODEL / CHASSIS	ENGINE	MILEAGE	DRIVETRAIN
Boxster · 986 Boxster (2.7)	Porsche M96/M97 water-cooled flat-six (996, 997.1, 986/987 Boxster and Cayman)	95,000 mi	RWD
BUILD MONTH	**REPORT DATE**	**MODE**	**PREPARED FOR**
Not entered (door jamb)	October 27, 2026	Owner	Sample Owner

VIN check: check digit valid; model-year code '3' = 2003, matches the year entered. The VIN doesn't record the build month. Sample report: synthetic VIN.

1 · SUMMARY

What this car needs, in order

Each item compares this car's mileage with when owners and shops report the part failing. It is not an inspection: a qualified technician decides what the car actually needs.

1
job recommended now

0
to plan in the next 30,000 miles · plus 3 factory maintenance items

4
to watch or check at each service

Safety recalls NHTSA lists for this model year (1 of 2)

- **03V-004** · Tiptronic · key-lock cable: On Tiptronic cars the shifter may move out of Park with the key removed, so the car could roll away.

A model-year list, not a VIN check. The full report lists the others. Repairs are free at a Porsche dealer if open. On a car over 15 years old, ask the dealer whether a newer recall is still repaired free. Check this VIN at nhtsa.gov/recalls.

Step 0 · Free: run the VIN at nhtsa.gov/recalls and ask a Porsche dealer for a campaign printout. Read the build month (MM/YY) on the driver's door-jamb label.

Recommended now at the next service — $1,500–$3,000

Intermediate shaft (IMS) bearing failure — $1,500–$3,000
Past the range (26,000–50,000 mi, the middle half of 18 owner reports)
independent shop, installed

`If it fails: $15,000–$30,000 · 10×+`

Next 12 months up to about 107,000 mi

Nothing scheduled here.

Within the next 30,000 miles up to 125,000 mi

Nothing else enters its reported range in this window.

Watch inspect at each service, fix on condition, or optional

Cylinder bore scoring — **No published price**
Any mileage (Higher-mileage 3.6 and 3.8 engines especially) · Ask for this check at every service

Coolant leaks (fittings and pipes) — **No published price**
Any mileage (Any age; owners report glued coolant fittings coming loose) · Inspect at each service; fix at the first sign

Rear main seal leak — **$1,500–$1,600**
independent shop, installed
Any mileage (Engines before the May 2005 seal change) · Inspect at each service; fix at the first sign

Cracked ignition coils — **No published price**
Any mileage (1997–2013 Boxster, Cayman, 996 and 997) · Inspect at each service; fix at the first sign

Recommended now

$1,500–$3,000

Independent shop, installed. Dealers often charge more.

Planned through 125,000 mi

$1,500–$3,000

No other repairs on the list before 125,000 mi. Now + next 12 months + next 30,000 miles. Excludes factory maintenance (listed separately), “watch” and optional items.

Costs are published independent-shop ranges (low end + low end, high end + high end). Bundled jobs are priced together because the labor overlaps. Routine service (oil, brakes, tires) isn't included; factory fluid and spark plug intervals are listed below.

FACTORY MAINTENANCE

Scheduled maintenance from 95,000 mi to 125,000 mi

The maker's normal schedule for this car. Service history isn't known here, so an item is shown at its next interval mark; skip it if the records show it was done.

ITEM	INTERVAL	THIS CAR
Spark plugs Porsche: every 60,000 miles from model year 2001.	every 60,000 mi	**Was due at 60,000 mi, next 120,000 mi** [M1]
Automatic transmission fluid Tiptronic: ATF and filter every 90,000 miles.	every 90,000 mi	**Was due at 90,000 mi (check records)** [M1]
Brake fluid Porsche: every 2 years.	every 2 years	**By time: check the records** [M1]

M1. Porsche Cars North America Maintenance Schedule, 911 (996) and Boxster (986), Edition 2/06 (copy hosted by PcarWise)
OFFICIAL
https://www.pcarwise.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/996-service-schedule.pdf

WHERE 95K SITS FOR EACH WEAK POINT

#	WEAK POINT	REPORTED RANGE	THIS CAR
1	Intermediate shaft (IMS) bearing failure	26,000–50,000 mi (middle half of 18 owner complaints that state a mileage) COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA	Past the range
2	Cylinder bore scoring	Higher-mileage 3.6 and 3.8 engines especially SHOP/RETAILER	Any mileage
3	Coolant leaks (fittings and pipes)	Any age; owners report glued coolant fittings coming loose FORUM/BLOG	Any mileage
4	Rear main seal leak	Engines before the May 2005 seal change OFFICIAL	Any mileage
5	Cracked ignition coils	1997–2013 Boxster, Cayman, 996 and 997 OFFICIAL	Any mileage

Colors compare mileage with reported failures, not the car's condition. Red: past the range. Amber: inside or approaching. Green: below, or not listed for a recall.

2 · RECALLS AND BULLETINS

Recalls to check for this 2003 Porsche Boxster

Safety recall repairs are free at Porsche dealers. On a car over 15 years old, ask the dealer whether a newer recall is still repaired free. Nothing here can tell whether a recall is open or already done on this VIN; only the official VIN lookup or a dealer can.

Official VIN check (2 minutes)

1. Go to nhtsa.gov/recalls and enter WP0CA29843U123456.
2. Note every recall shown as “Recall incomplete” and keep a screenshot.
3. Ask a Porsche dealer for a campaign printout; it also lists completed campaigns.

M96/M97 FLAT-SIX RECALLS WE TRACK

NHTSA lists no engine-specific recall campaign for the M96/M97 flat-six as of 2026-10-27. Recalls on the rest of the car are in the model-year list below.

EVERY RECALL NHTSA LISTS FOR THE 2003 PORSCHE BOXSTER (2)

RECALL	COMPONENT	WHAT CAN HAPPEN (NHTSA, SHORTENED)
03V-004	Tiptronic · key-lock cable	On Tiptronic cars the shifter may move out of Park with the key removed, so the car could roll away. Details
22V-656	Headlights · aim caps	Missing caps on the headlight aiming screws can let the low beams be mis-aimed. Details

Source: NHTSA recalls API, fetched 2026-10-27 and combined across NHTSA model names: BOXSTER. Safety categories (air bags, fire, brakes, stalling, roll-away and loss of control) are listed first; listings whose NHTSA text names another engine, or an aftermarket part, go last. OFFICIAL
Left out of this list (BOXSTER): 09E-012 and 09E-025 cover aftermarket corner lamps, not the vehicle, and are left out of this sample; a VIN check would show any open vehicle recall. 03V-004 applies only to Tiptronic (automatic) cars.

SERVICE ACTIONS, BULLETINS AND WARRANTY PROGRAMS

CAMPAIGN	WHAT IT SAYS	THIS CAR
IMS bearing class action (Eisen v. Porsche Cars North America)	Reimbursement for IMS failures within 10 years / 130,000 miles on cars built May 4, 2001 to February 21, 2005. Ended. FORUM/BLOG [3]	Expired

4 · THE 5 WEAK POINTS

Each weak point, one card each

Every figure carries its source. Retailer part numbers are shown only when the retailer lists them for this chassis (986).

1 Intermediate shaft (IMS) bearing failure

Past the range

Severity: Critical: rare, but can badly damage the engine · 42 mentions in counted NHTSA complaints COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA

At 95,000 mi this car is past the reported range (26,000–50,000 mi (middle half of 18 owner complaints that state a mileage)). If the original parts are still fitted, have them checked and plan for them. Range: 26,000–50,000 mi (middle half of 18 owner complaints that state a mileage) COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA [1]



Applies to: Cars built May 2001 to February 2005 were in the class action; earlier and later M96/M97 engines also use an IMS bearing

WHAT FAILS FORUM/BLOG [2][3]

The sealed bearing that supports the intermediate shaft can fail. When it does, the cam timing is lost and the engine is usually destroyed. A class action covered failures within 10 years or 130,000 miles on cars built May 2001 to February 2005; that coverage has ended.

SYMPTOMS

- Often no warning
- Metal flakes in the oil filter
- Rattle or ticking from the back of the engine

IF IT'S LEFT TOO LONG

A failed bearing usually means a new or rebuilt engine.

IS IT WORTH DOING EARLY? OUR ESTIMATE

Retrofit an upgraded bearing when the clutch is replaced, if the engine design allows it.

ESTIMATED REPAIR COST

Bearing retrofit with clutch, owner reports	**$1,500–$3,000** FORUM/BLOG [4][5] independent shop, installed
Engine rebuild (specialist shop)	**$15,000–$30,000** SHOP/RETAILER [6] reported range for the bill after a failure
Dealer	**Often 1.5–2× the independent-shop price** OUR ESTIMATE

10×+ The failure-bill midpoint ($22,500) is about 10×+ the early-fix midpoint ($2,250). A cost ratio, not a probability.

PARTS FOR 986

- Ask your parts supplier for the OE part number for this VIN.

WHAT TO ASK YOUR SHOP

- Has the IMS bearing been retrofitted? Which kit? Receipt?
- Oil changes every year or less?

2 Cylinder bore scoring

Any mileage

Severity: Critical: rare, but can badly damage the engine · 10 mentions in counted NHTSA complaints

COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA

Reports cover a wide mileage span (Higher-mileage 3.6 and 3.8 engines especially), so mileage doesn't say much here. Range: Higher-mileage 3.6 and 3.8 engines especially SHOP/RETAILER [11]

WHAT FAILS SHOP/RETAILER [11]

The aluminum cylinder walls can score, usually on one bank. A specialist shop says the 996 and 997.1 engines are vulnerable. Signs are oil use, smoke and a ticking noise.

SYMPTOMS

- Blue smoke at start-up
- Oil consumption rising
- Ticking on one bank
- Sooty tailpipe on one side

IF IT'S LEFT TOO LONG

Scoring gets worse and ends in a rebuild.

IS IT WORTH DOING EARLY? OUR ESTIMATE

Borescope the cylinders before buying.

ESTIMATED REPAIR COST

No early fix; a borescope inspection finds it, and the repair is cylinder work	**No published price** independent shop, installed
Full engine rebuild	**$15,000–$30,000** SHOP/RETAILER [6] reported range for the bill after a failure
Dealer	**Often 1.5–2× the independent-shop price** OUR ESTIMATE

PARTS FOR 986

- Ask your parts supplier for the OE part number for this VIN.

WHAT TO ASK YOUR SHOP

- Any oil smoke or rising oil use?
- Borescope done?

3 Coolant leaks (fittings and pipes)

Any mileage

Severity: High: overheating, stalls, limp mode or a big bill · 50 mentions in counted NHTSA complaints

COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA

Reports cover a wide mileage span (Any age; owners report glued coolant fittings coming loose), so mileage doesn't say much here. Range: Any age; owners report glued coolant fittings coming loose FORUM/BLOG [10]

WHAT FAILS FORUM/BLOG [10][1]

Owners report coolant fittings glued into the engine block coming loose, and coolant pipes leaking. Some shops pin or weld the fittings to stop it. NHTSA complaints include sudden coolant loss.

SYMPTOMS

- Sudden coolant loss
- Coolant smell or steam
- Low coolant warning

IF IT'S LEFT TOO LONG

ESTIMATED REPAIR COST

No published US price	**No published price** independent shop, installed
No published US price	**No published price** reported range for the bill after a failure
Dealer	**Often 1.5–2× the independent-shop price** OUR ESTIMATE

PARTS FOR 986

A fitting that pops out can dump coolant at speed and overheat the engine.

IS IT WORTH DOING EARLY? OUR ESTIMATE

Pin or weld the fittings during other engine-out work.

WHAT TO ASK YOUR SHOP

- Coolant fittings pinned or welded?
- Any overheating history?

4 Rear main seal leak

Any mileage

Severity: Medium: leaks and wear · 4 mentions in counted NHTSA complaints

COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA

Reports cover a wide mileage span (Engines before the May 2005 seal change), so mileage doesn't say much here.

Range: Engines before the May 2005 seal change OFFICIAL [8]

WHAT FAILS OFFICIAL [8]

Oil can leak from the rear crankshaft seal into the bellhousing. Porsche fitted a new seal from mid-2005 because of possible leaks.

SYMPTOMS

- Oil drips between engine and transmission
- Oil on the clutch

IF IT'S LEFT TOO LONG

A small seep is common; a real leak can soak the clutch.

IS IT WORTH DOING EARLY? OUR ESTIMATE

Replace the seal when the clutch is done.

ESTIMATED REPAIR COST

Rear main seal with clutch (shop guide)	**$1,500–$1,600** SHOP/RETAILER [7] independent shop, installed
Same job	**$1,500–$1,600** SHOP/RETAILER [7] reported range for the bill after a failure
Dealer	**Often 1.5–2× the independent-shop price** OUR ESTIMATE

1.0× The failure-bill midpoint ($1,550) is about 1.0× the early-fix midpoint ($1,550). A cost ratio, not a probability.

PARTS FOR 986

- Ask your parts supplier for the OE part number for this VIN.

WHAT TO ASK YOUR SHOP

- Rear main seal ever replaced?

5 Cracked ignition coils

Any mileage

Severity: Medium: leaks and wear · 2 mentions in counted NHTSA complaints

COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA

Reports cover a wide mileage span (1997–2013 Boxster, Cayman, 996 and 997), so mileage doesn't say much here.

Range: 1997–2013 Boxster, Cayman, 996 and 997 OFFICIAL [9]

WHAT FAILS OFFICIAL [9]

Cracks in the ignition coil housing let in moisture and cause misfires. Porsche says to replace all coils if a faulty coil lacks the "EM 10" mark.

SYMPTOMS

- Misfire
- Rough running
- Flashing check-engine light

IF IT'S LEFT TOO LONG

Misfires can overheat the catalytic converters.

IS IT WORTH DOING EARLY? OUR ESTIMATE

Replace with the updated coils.

ESTIMATED REPAIR COST

No published price	**No published price** independent shop, installed
No published price	**No published price** reported range for the bill after a failure
Dealer	**Often 1.5–2× the independent-shop price** OUR ESTIMATE

PARTS FOR 986

- Ask your parts supplier for the OE part number for this VIN.

WHAT TO ASK YOUR SHOP

- Coils replaced with EM 10 parts?

5 · ALSO REPORTED, NOT RANKED

Other themes in M96/M97 flat-six owner complaints

Every NHTSA complaint theme with 10 or more counted reports is either a weak point above or explained here.

THEME	COMPLAINTS	WHY IT ISN'T A WEAK POINT
Transmission	13	Counts all transmission complaints; not an engine fault.

6 · BUYING OR SELLING

Used-car checklist and resale helper

For owners this is a resale checklist: it's what a careful buyer will ask.

Ask the inspecting shop to check

- Oil filter for metal
- Borescope cylinders
- Bellhousing for oil
- Coolant fittings

Ask the seller

- IMS bearing retrofit receipt?
- Oil change interval?
- Any oil smoke?

Documents to request

- Dealer service-history printout for the VIN
- nhtsa.gov/recalls screenshot

WHAT A BUYER MAY DEDUCT

	FINDING	ESTIMATED ADJUSTMENT
●	Intermediate shaft (IMS) bearing failure: original, no replacement invoice	$1,500–$3,000
	Cylinder bore scoring: fault found on inspection	$15,000–$30,000
	Coolant leaks (fittings and pipes): seeping or leaking	No published price
	Rear main seal leak: seeping or leaking	$1,500–$1,600
	Cracked ignition coils: symptoms or fault codes present	No published price
	Pre-ticked rows (●), if no records clear them	**$1,500–$3,000**

● = expected at this mileage. Estimated repair costs, not an appraisal. Recalls cost the seller nothing: ask for open recalls to be completed rather than discounted. OUR ESTIMATE

7 · METHOD AND SOURCES

How this report is built

Inputs. VIN, model year, model, mileage and build month (if entered). Model and engine are checked with NHTSA's vPIC decoder.

Mileage positions. Below: more than 10,000 miles before the reported range. Approaching: within 10,000. Inside: in the range, or past the start of an open-ended range. Past: beyond the top of the range. These bands are our rules, not an industry standard.

The plan. Critical items inside or past their range go first; high-severity items follow, and jobs that share labor are bundled. At most three jobs land in “Recommended now”. Leaks that are cheap to watch are fixed on condition; inspections are asked for at each service.

Costs. Published independent-shop ranges from shop quotes, retailer prices and owner reports. The worst-case cost of every item failing is not shown: it isn't an expected cost.

Labels. OFFICIAL NHTSA/Porsche documents · SHOP/RETAILER parts prices and shop articles · FORUM/BLOG owner forums and blogs · COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA our analysis of NHTSA data · OUR ESTIMATE ours.

NHTSA complaint data. Pulled Oct 27, 2026 from NHTSA's complaints API for 911 Carrera complaints leaving out Turbo, GT2 and GT3, plus all Boxster and Cayman complaints for these years (204 complaints): 204 complaints. Some of these nameplates were sold with other engines too; for those we left out complaints whose text names another engine or a hybrid, so a few complaints about other engines can remain. Themes are keyword matches on the complaint text. NHTSA data is thin (204 complaints); most of the evidence is the class action and specialist sources. COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA

THEME	COMPLAINTS	IN THIS REPORT
Coolant	50	Item 3
IMS bearing / engine failure	42	Item 1
Transmission	13	Also reported
Bore scoring / oil smoke	10	Item 2
Rear main seal	4	Item 4
Ignition coil / misfire	2	Item 5

Limits: complaints are self-reported and not adjusted for cars sold; keyword matching over- and under-counts; owners rarely file safety complaints about oil seeps, so leaks look rarer than they are.

SOURCES

1. NHTSA owner complaints for 1999–2008 911 Carrera (996 and 997.1, not Turbo/GT), 1999–2008 Boxster and 2005–2008 Cayman, pulled Oct 27, 2026 (ODI numbers in the cost notes) OFFICIAL
https://www.nhtsa.gov/report-a-safety-problem#complaints

2. Sports Car Market, Legal Files: lawsuit has a bearing on Porsche owners (Eisen IMS class action) FORUM/BLOG
https://www.sportscarmarket.com/columns/legal-files/lawsuit-has-a-bearing-on-porsche-owners

3. Ferdinand magazine: IMS bearing class action settlement (cars built May 4, 2001 to Feb 21, 2005; 10 years / 130,000 miles) FORUM/BLOG
https://ferdinandmagazine.com/?p=10431

4. Rennlist 996 forum: IMS labor cost (owner reports), via search extract Oct 27, 2026 FORUM/BLOG
https://rennlist.com/forums/996-forum/941270-ims-labor-cost-2.html

5. Rennlist 996 forum: IMS cost (owner reports, about $1,800 with an LN bearing), via search extract Oct 27, 2026 FORUM/BLOG
https://rennlist.com/forums/996-forum/1122164-ims-cost-2.html

6. LN Engineering: Porsche engine rebuild cost breakdown (bore scoring repair $5,000–$6,000; rebuild $15,000–$30,000+) SHOP/RETAILER
https://docs.lnengineering.com/article/137-porsche-engine-rebuild-cost-a-comprehensive-breakdown

7. RennSport KC: 996 buyer's guide (rear main seal about $1,500–$1,600 with clutch), via search extract Oct 27, 2026 SHOP/RETAILER
https://rennsportkc.com/996-buyers-guide/

8. Porsche Technical bulletin 605: New crankshaft sealing ring installed because of possible leaks at the crankshaft seal (2005-09-12), filed with NHTSA OFFICIAL
https://www.nhtsa.gov/?nhtsaId=10017547

9. Porsche Technical Information 58/12: Ignition coil housing cracked: misfire and rough running (1997–2013 Boxster, Cayman, 996, 997) (2012-09-06), filed with NHTSA OFFICIAL
https://static.nhtsa.gov/odi/tsbs/2012/MC-10109328-9999.pdf

10. 911uk forum: why get your coolant lines pinned (glued coolant fittings), via search extract Oct 27, 2026 FORUM/BLOG
https://911uk.com/porsche/why-would-you-want-to-get-your-coolant-lines-pinned.130644/?amp=1

11. LN Engineering: are 997.2 and 991.1 engines susceptible to bore scoring (covers the earlier M96/M97 too) SHOP/RETAILER
https://docs.lnengineering.com/article/130-are-porsche-997-2-and-991-1-9a1-ma1-engines-susceptible-to-bore-scoring

This report contains no affiliate links; retailer prices are quoted as price sources only. Found an error? Email hello@repairahead.com.

PLEASE READ

Important

Based on public records and published repair costs. Not a diagnosis or a guarantee. Your technician's inspection decides what your car needs. Confirm recalls with a dealer using your VIN.

Informational only. This report is not a mechanical inspection, a diagnosis, or professional, legal or financial advice. Nobody from RepairAhead has seen, driven or inspected this vehicle.

Reported ranges and estimates, not predictions

Failure mileages are reported ranges compiled from public owner complaints, manufacturer bulletins, recalls and repair-shop reports. Costs are estimates. Parts can fail earlier, later or not at all, and other problems can occur. Statistics from owner complaints describe past reports to NHTSA; NHTSA has not reviewed or endorsed this analysis.

Safety issues go to a dealer

If you notice overheating, a burning or fuel smell, smoke, a brake-assist problem, stalling or loss of power, pull over when it's safe and contact a Porsche dealer or qualified shop. Safety recall repairs are free at Porsche dealers. Confirm recalls for this VIN at nhtsa.gov/recalls.

No warranty

Provided “as is”, without warranties of any kind, under the Terms of Use at repairahead.com/terms.

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Wrong input (VIN, mileage, build date)? Email hello@repairahead.com with report ID RA-M96-123456-20261027 and we'll correct and reissue it.

Based on public records and published repair costs. Not a diagnosis or a guarantee. Your technician's inspection decides what your car needs. Confirm recalls with a dealer using your VIN.