SAC **Springfield Auto Care** EXAMPLE SHOP
service@springfield-auto-care.example

2010 Subaru Forester at 120,000 mi

JF2SH6BC9AH123456

MODEL / CHASSIS	ENGINE	MILEAGE	DRIVETRAIN
Forester · SH Forester 2.5X (2.5L non-turbo)	Subaru EJ25 2.5L boxer four (non-turbo)	120,000 mi	AWD
BUILD MONTH	**REPORT DATE**	**MODE**	**PREPARED FOR**
Not entered (door jamb)	October 27, 2026	Shop	Sample Owner

VIN check: check digit valid; model-year code 'A' = 2010, 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: our technician decides what the car actually needs.

2 jobs recommended now

0 to plan in the next 30,000 miles

2 to watch or check at each service

Safety recalls NHTSA lists for this model year (14)

- **22V-838** · Seat belts · front force limiters: The front seat belt force limiter may not work properly in a crash.
- **20V-003** · Air bags · passenger frontal inflator (earlier replacement): A replacement inflator fitted under an earlier recall can explode over time and throw metal fragments.
- **20V-002** · Air bags · passenger frontal inflator (earlier replacement): A replacement inflator fitted under an earlier recall can explode over time and throw metal fragments.
- **20V-001** · Air bags · passenger frontal inflator (earlier replacement): A replacement inflator fitted under an earlier recall can explode over time and throw metal fragments.
- **19V-009** · Air bags · passenger frontal inflator: The inflator can explode in a crash and throw metal fragments.
- **19V-008** · Air bags · passenger frontal inflator: The inflator can explode in a crash and throw metal fragments.
- **19V-007** · Air bags · passenger frontal inflator: The inflator can explode in a crash and throw metal fragments.
- **18V-013** · Air bags · passenger frontal inflator: The inflator can explode in a crash and throw metal fragments.
- **18V-012** · Air bags · passenger frontal inflator: The inflator can explode in a crash and throw metal fragments.
- **17V-014** · Air bags · passenger frontal inflator: The inflator can rupture in a crash and throw metal fragments.
- **16V-358** · Air bags · passenger frontal inflator: The inflator can rupture in a crash and throw metal fragments.
- **14V-830** · Brakes · brake lines (follow-up, salt states): Brake lines fixed before December 2014 can still corrode and leak, so stopping takes longer.
- **14V-311** · Brakes · brake lines (salt states): Salt water can corrode the brake lines and make them leak, so stopping takes longer.
- **12V-099** · Seat belts · rear center (child seat): The rear center belt may not lock to hold a child seat securely.

A model-year list, not a VIN check. Repairs are free at a Subaru 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 Subaru dealer for a campaign printout. Read the build month (MM/YY) on the driver's door-jamb label.

Recommended now at the next service

Timing belt and water pump (interference engine)

Ask us for a quote

Past the range (Every 105,000 miles (Subaru 2.5L interval, trade article)) · if the records don't show it done

Inspection: check now, while it's cheaper to fix

$140

inspection EXAMPLE

Head gaskets (external coolant or oil leaks): Past the range (65,000–105,000 mi, the middle half of 95 owner reports) · if it fails: $1,500–$2,500

Known weak point for this engine, not a finding on your car. The inspection shows whether yours has early signs.

Next 12 months up to about 132,000 mi

Nothing scheduled here.

Within the next 30,000 miles up to 150,000 mi

Nothing else enters its reported range in this window.

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

White smoke and oil burning (valve guide machining), 2010–2011

$1,020

our price EXAMPLE

Any mileage (2010 Forester and 2011 Legacy, Outback and Impreza 2.5) · Inspect at each service; fix at the first sign

Oil seepage at the oil filler tube O-ring

$40

our price EXAMPLE

Past the range (53,000–90,000 mi, the middle half of 16 owner reports) · Inspect at each service; fix at the first sign

Recommended now

$140 + 1 to quote

Springfield Auto Care prices (example)

Planned through 150,000 mi

$140 + 1 to quote

Nothing else on the list before 150,000 mi. Now + next 12 months + next 30,000 miles. Excludes “watch” and optional items.

Prices are Springfield Auto Care's estimates for typical parts and labor. They don't include tax, shop supplies or disposal fees, and may change after inspection or if part prices change. Not a written repair estimate: Springfield Auto Care confirms the price and gets your OK before any work.

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

The maker's maintenance schedule isn't on this report

This report doesn't include the maker's scheduled maintenance for this car yet, so brake fluid, spark plugs, coolant and transmission fluid aren't listed even when they're due. Check the service records and the maker's schedule for this car.

WHERE 120K SITS FOR EACH WEAK POINT

#	WEAK POINT	REPORTED RANGE	THIS CAR
1	Head gaskets (external coolant or oil leaks)	65,000–105,000 mi (middle half of 95 owner complaints that state a mileage) COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA	Past the range
2	White smoke and oil burning (valve guide machining), 2010–2011	2010 Forester and 2011 Legacy, Outback and Impreza 2.5 OFFICIAL	Any mileage
3	Oil seepage at the oil filler tube O-ring	53,000–90,000 mi (middle half of 16 owner complaints that state a mileage) COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA	Past the range
4	Timing belt and water pump (interference engine)	Every 105,000 miles (Subaru 2.5L interval, trade article) SHOP/RETAILER	Past the range

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 2010 Subaru Forester

Safety recall repairs are free at Subaru 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 JF2SH6BC9AH123456.
2. Note every recall shown as “Recall incomplete” and keep a screenshot.
3. Ask a Subaru dealer for a campaign printout; it also lists completed campaigns.

2.5L EJ25 RECALLS WE TRACK

Other 2.5L EJ25 recalls we track, not listed by NHTSA for this model and year: 02V-240 (water pump pulley improperly machined (2003 models)), 04V-473 (oil control valve cover bolts loose (2004 models)).

EVERY RECALL NHTSA LISTS FOR THE 2010 SUBARU FORESTER (14)

RECALL	COMPONENT	WHAT CAN HAPPEN (NHTSA, SHORTENED)
22V-838	Seat belts · front force limiters	The front seat belt force limiter may not work properly in a crash. Details
20V-003	Air bags · passenger frontal inflator (earlier replacement)	A replacement inflator fitted under an earlier recall can explode over time and throw metal fragments. Details
20V-002	Air bags · passenger frontal inflator (earlier replacement)	A replacement inflator fitted under an earlier recall can explode over time and throw metal fragments. Details
20V-001	Air bags · passenger frontal inflator (earlier replacement)	A replacement inflator fitted under an earlier recall can explode over time and throw metal fragments. Details
19V-009	Air bags · passenger frontal inflator	The inflator can explode in a crash and throw metal fragments. Details
19V-008	Air bags · passenger frontal inflator	The inflator can explode in a crash and throw metal fragments. Details
19V-007	Air bags · passenger frontal inflator	The inflator can explode in a crash and throw metal fragments. Details
18V-013	Air bags · passenger frontal inflator	The inflator can explode in a crash and throw metal fragments. Details
18V-012	Air bags · passenger frontal inflator	The inflator can explode in a crash and throw metal fragments. Details
17V-014	Air bags · passenger frontal inflator	The inflator can rupture in a crash and throw metal fragments. Details
16V-358	Air bags · passenger frontal inflator	The inflator can rupture in a crash and throw metal fragments. Details

RECALL	COMPONENT	WHAT CAN HAPPEN (NHTSA, SHORTENED)
14V-830	Brakes · brake lines (follow-up, salt states)	Brake lines fixed before December 2014 can still corrode and leak, so stopping takes longer. Details
14V-311	Brakes · brake lines (salt states)	Salt water can corrode the brake lines and make them leak, so stopping takes longer. Details
12V-099	Seat belts · rear center (child seat)	The rear center belt may not lock to hold a child seat securely. Details

Source: NHTSA recalls API, fetched 2026-10-27 and combined across NHTSA model names: FORESTER. 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 (FORESTER): Three listings are left out of this 2.5X sample: 16V-738 (air pump relay, turbo models only), 19V-297 (replacement ignition switches sold as service parts) and 12V-602 (dealer-installed accessory puddle lights). A VIN check would show them if they applied.

SERVICE ACTIONS, BULLETINS AND WARRANTY PROGRAMS

Manufacturer bulletins and warranty programs for this engine are cited on each weak point in section 4, where they apply.

4 · THE 4 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 (SH).

1 Head gaskets (external coolant or oil leaks)

Past the range

Severity: Critical: rare, but can badly damage the engine · 270 mentions in counted NHTSA complaints COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA

At 120,000 mi this car is past the reported range (65,000–105,000 mi (middle half of 95 owner complaints that state a mileage)). If the original parts are still fitted, have them checked and plan for them. Range: 65,000–105,000 mi (middle half of 95 owner complaints that state a mileage) COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA [1]



Applies to: Most often around 100,000 miles, per the trade article

WHAT FAILS SHOP/RETAILER [2]

The EJ25 is known for head gasket failure. Early (SOHC) engines usually leak coolant on the outside, often from the left side; later engines more often leak oil. Shops replace both gaskets with multi-layer steel ones and machine the heads flat.

SYMPTOMS

- Coolant level dropping
- Oily residue in the coolant overflow bottle
- Overheating on long highway drives
- Oil or coolant crust at the head-to-block seam

IF IT'S LEFT TOO LONG

Driving while overheating can warp the heads and ruin the engine.

IS IT WORTH DOING EARLY? OUR ESTIMATE

Fix at the first seep; pair it with the timing belt and water pump while the engine is apart.

ESTIMATED REPAIR COST

Owner-reported repair bills in NHTSA complaints (n=19)	**Our price is in the plan above** ask us for a written quote
Owner-reported repair bills in NHTSA complaints (n=19)	**$1,500–$2,500** COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA [1] reported range for the bill after a failure

Where the numbers come from: Computed from 19 NHTSA owner complaints that quote a repair bill for this problem (middle half of the bills; median $2,000). Examples: ODI 10212011, 10254368, 10176336, 11172994. Owner-reported, often dealer prices; not shop quotes.

PARTS FOR SH

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

QUESTIONS TO ASK US

- Any coolant top-ups or overheating?
- Head gaskets ever replaced (with MLS gaskets)?

2 White smoke and oil burning (valve guide machining), 2010–2011

Any mileage

Severity: High: overheating, stalls, limp mode or a big bill · 32 mentions in counted NHTSA complaints COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA

Reports cover a wide mileage span (2010 Forester and 2011 Legacy, Outback and Impreza 2.5), so mileage doesn't say much here. Range: 2010 Forester and 2011 Legacy, Outback and Impreza 2.5 OFFICIAL [4]

WHAT FAILS OFFICIAL [4]

On some engines the #1 and/or #4 intake valve guide hole was machined wrong, so oil gets into the cylinder. The car smokes white and burns oil. Subaru repairs the cylinder head.

SYMPTOMS

- White smoke from the tailpipe
- High oil consumption

IF IT'S LEFT TOO LONG

Burning oil fouls plugs and can damage the catalytic converter.

IS IT WORTH DOING EARLY? OUR ESTIMATE

Have the heads checked if a 2010–2011 car smokes or burns oil.

ESTIMATED REPAIR COST

Labor only, 4.5–6.6 h Subaru warranty time plus cylinder head machining or parts	**Our price is in the plan above** ask us for a written quote
Labor only, 4.5–6.6 h Subaru warranty time plus cylinder head machining or parts	**$450–$1,060** OUR ESTIMATE [4][6] labor only, parts extra

Where the numbers come from: Estimate: Subaru warranty labor time of 4.5–6.6 h (bulletin [4]) × $100–$160/h independent-shop labor rate [6]. Parts are extra unless stated; check the VIN for open warranty coverage first.

PARTS FOR SH

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

QUESTIONS TO ASK US

- Any smoke or oil burning?

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3 Oil seepage at the oil filler tube O-ring

Past the range

Severity: Medium: leaks and wear · 52 mentions in counted NHTSA complaints

COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA

At 120,000 mi this car is past the reported range (53,000–90,000 mi (middle half of 16 owner complaints that state a mileage)). If the original parts are still fitted, have them checked and plan for them. Range: 53,000–90,000 mi (middle half of 16 owner complaints that state a mileage) COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA [1]



Applies to: 2002–2013 EJ engines (Forester, Impreza, Legacy/Outback)

WHAT FAILS OFFICIAL [3]

Oil can seep from the oil filler tube O-ring and collect along the bottom of the valve (rocker) cover, so it looks like a valve cover leak. Subaru fits a new, more heat-resistant O-ring.

SYMPTOMS

ESTIMATED REPAIR COST

Labor only, 0.2 h Subaru warranty time plus the O-ring	**Our price is in the plan above** ask us for a written quote

- Oil along the bottom of the valve cover
- Burning-oil smell

IF IT'S LEFT TOO LONG

Small leak; oil can drip on the exhaust.

IS IT WORTH DOING EARLY? OUR ESTIMATE

Replace the O-ring before replacing valve cover gaskets.

Labor only, 0.2 h Subaru warranty time plus the O-ring	**$20–$30** OUR ESTIMATE [3][6] labor only, parts extra

Where the numbers come from: Estimate: Subaru warranty labor time of 0.2 h (bulletin [3]) × $100–$160/h independent-shop labor rate [6]. Parts are extra unless stated; check the VIN for open warranty coverage first.

PARTS FOR SH

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

QUESTIONS TO ASK US

- Any oil smell?

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4 Timing belt and water pump (interference engine)

Past the range

Severity: High: overheating, stalls, limp mode or a big bill · 0 mentions in counted NHTSA complaints COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA

At 120,000 mi this car is past the reported range (Every 105,000 miles (Subaru 2.5L interval, trade article)). If the original parts are still fitted, have them checked and plan for them. Range: Every 105,000 miles (Subaru 2.5L interval, trade article) SHOP/RETAILER [8]



WHAT FAILS SHOP/RETAILER [8]

The EJ25 uses a rubber timing belt with its tensioner and idlers, and it is an interference engine, so a broken belt lets the valves hit the pistons. Shops replace the water pump, tensioner and idlers with the belt, and often the cam and crank seals while the covers are off.

SYMPTOMS

- No warning before a break
- Whine or rattle from a worn tensioner or idler
- Coolant seep at the water pump

IF IT'S LEFT TOO LONG

A broken belt stops the engine at once and can bend valves.

IS IT WORTH DOING EARLY? OUR ESTIMATE

Yes, if there is no record of it in the last 105,000 miles. Doing the water pump, tensioner and idlers with it avoids paying for the same labor twice.

ESTIMATED REPAIR COST

Timing belt replacement, 2009 Forester (KBB fair range, dealer tier, one ZIP)	**Our price is in the plan above** ask us for a written quote
Broken belt: valve and head repair (no published price)	**No published price** reported range for the bill after a failure

PARTS FOR SH

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

QUESTIONS TO ASK US

- When was the timing belt done, with the water pump, tensioner and idlers?

5 · ALSO REPORTED, NOT RANKED

Other themes in 2.5L EJ25 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	726	Counts every transmission complaint (4-speed automatic, 2010–2012 CVT); not an engine fault. The CVT extension 16-107-17R covered 2010–2015 Legacy/Outback.
Catalytic converter	44	Subaru ran software and catalytic converter service programs (WVM-23, WQD-40, WVH-18) on some 2005–2009 PZEV models; check the VIN.
Timing belt	27	A timing belt engine; we did not find a Subaru document with the interval in the NHTSA files. Follow the owner's maintenance schedule.

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. Shop prices come from the issuing shop. The worst-case cost of every item failing is not shown: it isn't an expected cost.

Labels. `OFFICIAL` NHTSA/Subaru 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 Forester, Impreza, Legacy, Outback and Baja complaints for the listed years that do not mention a turbo, WRX/STI, XT/GT or six-cylinder, plus 2005–2006 Saab 9-2X complaints that name the Linear or 2.5 and no turbo: 6,147 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. `COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA`

THEME	COMPLAINTS	IN THIS REPORT
Transmission	726	Also reported
Head gasket / coolant loss	270	Item 1
Oil leak	52	Item 3
Catalytic converter	44	Also reported
Oil consumption / smoke	32	Item 2
Timing belt	27	Also reported

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 2000–2010 Forester, 2000–2011 Impreza, 2000–2012 Legacy/Outback and 2003–2006 Baja (non-turbo) and 2005–2006 Saab 9-2X Linear, pulled Oct 27, 2026 (ODI numbers in the cost notes) `OFFICIAL`
https://www.nhtsa.gov/report-a-safety-problem#complaints

2. Underhood Service: Properly replacing Subaru EJ25 head gaskets takes patience, quality parts `SHOP/RETAILER`
https://www.underhoodservice.com/?p=191080

3. Subaru Service Bulletin 02-172-18R: Oil seepage: new oil filler tube O-ring (EJ engines) (2018-02-06), filed with NHTSA `OFFICIAL`
https://static.nhtsa.gov/odi/tsbs/2018/MC-10140479-9999.pdf

4. Subaru Service Bulletin 02-115-11R: White smoke from tailpipe and/or high oil consumption (intake valve guide hole), 2010 Forester, 2011 Legacy/Outback/Impreza 2.5 (2013-02-07), filed with NHTSA `OFFICIAL`
https://static.nhtsa.gov/odi/tsbs/2013/SB-10067846-0699.pdf

5. NHTSA recall records: 02V-240 (water pump pulley) and 04V-473 (oil control valve cover bolts), checked Oct 27, 2026 `OFFICIAL`
https://www.nhtsa.gov/recalls?nhtsaId=02V240000

6. Tekmetric: average auto repair labor rates by state, 2026 `SHOP/RETAILER`
https://tours.tekmetric.com/answers/average-auto-repair-labor-rates-by-state-2026

7. fueleconomy.gov: Saab 9-2X engines (2005: 2.0L turbo Aero, 2.5L Linear; 2006: 2.5L turbo Aero, 2.5L), checked Oct 28, 2026 `OFFICIAL`
https://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/bymodel/2005_Saab_9-2x.shtml

8. AutomotiveTechInfo (Underhood Service): T-Belt Time: All About Subaru OHC Timing Belts ("since 1996 Subaru has said you can go 105,000 miles before replacing the belt on a 2.5L"; the 2.5L is an interference engine), checked Nov 6, 2026 `SHOP/RETAILER`
https://automotivetechinfo.com/2005/02/t-belt-time-all-about-subaru-ohc-timing-belts

9. Kelley Blue Book: 2009 Subaru Forester timing belt replacement, checked Nov 6, 2026 SHOP/RETAILER
https://www.kbb.com/subaru/forester/2009/timing-belt-replacement

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. It was issued by Springfield Auto Care using RepairAhead data; the inspection findings and prices are the shop's.

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 Subaru dealer or qualified shop. Safety recall repairs are free at Subaru 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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