



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

INFORMATION Redacted PURSUANT TO THE FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(B)(6)

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 12, 2012

[REDACTED]
Stockholm, NJ [REDACTED]

NVS-216 mec
Ref. No. 10473462

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your correspondence concerning your model year (MY) 2001 Pontiac Grand Prix vehicle. The New Jersey Office of the Attorney General forwarded your correspondence to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Office of Defects Investigation.

NHTSA is the Federal agency responsible for improving safety on our Nation's highways. We are authorized to order manufacturers to recall and repair vehicles or motor vehicle equipment when our investigations indicate that they contain safety defects in their design, construction, or performance. We also monitor the adequacy of manufacturers' recall campaigns. In order for the agency to initiate an investigation, we look carefully at the body of consumer complaints and other available data to determine whether a defect trend may exist. We do not have authority to act on isolated problems or resolve disputes between individual owners, dealers, or manufacturers.

You indicate that the engine in your MY 2001 Pontiac Grand Prix caught fire. You believe this problem is a result of the safety defect identified in a recall (NHTSA Safety Recall Campaign No. 09V116). The recall remedy was performed on your vehicle on April 12, 2010. General Motors (GM) denied your claim to have the damage repaired under the recall because the New Jersey 4-year breach of warranty statute of limitation has expired. You request assistance in obtaining compensation for damages resulting from the fire.

In your letter you indicate that your MY 2001 Pontiac Grand Prix was damaged by fire in March 7, 2012, which almost 2 years after the recall was performed. In addition, you state that the fire looked like it started in the front of the engine by the wiring harness. The recall addresses a problem in certain GM vehicles equipped with a 3.8L V6 naturally aspirated engine when drops of oil deposit on the exhaust manifold through hard braking. If the manifold is hot enough and the oil runs below the heat shield, in rare instances, it may ignite into a small flame. The fire may spread to the plastic spark plug wire channel and beyond. However, the fire does not originate at a wire harness as you indicated was the case in your vehicle.

In addition, while we cannot guarantee the success of the remedy as installed in your vehicle by your dealer, we do not have any reason to believe that the corrective action submitted by the manufacturer does not work. Furthermore, Chapter 301 of Title 49 of the United States Code (U.S.C.) requires a manufacturer of motor vehicles or motor vehicle equipment that contain a defect relating to motor vehicle safety or fail to comply with a Federal motor vehicle safety standard to remedy the defect or noncompliance without charge. However, our statute does not require manufacturers to reimburse owners for additional costs associated with a safety recall (e.g., lost wages while the vehicle is being repaired, car rentals, repairs not performed by an authorized dealership, damage caused by the defect, etc.).

Your request for compensation for damages as a result of the fire does not fall under our jurisdiction. We recommend that you continue to work with GM to resolve any remaining issues. The information provided has been entered into our database and will be considered with future reports to identify any safety defect trends that may require our attention. For your information, the NHTSA investigation and recall process can be found on our web site at www.nhtsa.gov.

Should you encounter a safety-related problem with a motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment in the future, we would appreciate it if you would complete an electronic Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire online at www.nhtsa.gov or call the Auto Safety Hotline at 1-888-327-4236. Also, a summary listing of vehicle owners' complaints, safety recalls, manufacturers' service bulletins, etc. can be obtained from our web site.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randy Reid".

Randy Reid, Chief
Correspondence Research Division
Office of Defects Investigation
Enforcement