



U.S. Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

ODI RESUME

J. York

INVESTIGATION: EA02-030
DATE OPENED: 22-OCT-02
SUBJECT: Engine Compartment Fires
PROMPTED BY: PE02-050
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Bruce B. York

MANUFACTURER: General Motors Corporation (GM)
MODELS: Le Sabre, Park Avenue, Regal, 88, 98, Riviera, Bonneville, Grand Prix, Cutlass, and Monte Carlo vehicles equipped with 3.8 liter engines (VIN8 = "K")
MODEL YEARS: 1996 through 2000
TIRE POPULATION: 2,285,636

PROBLEM DESCRIPTION: A backfire during engine starting may result in fracture of the plastic intake manifold with the potential for severe engine compartment fire.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	MANUFACTURER	TOTAL
COMPLAINTS:	44	565	609
FIRES:	44	unk	44
INJ INCIDENTS:	0	2	2
INJURIES:	0	0	0
FAT INCIDENTS:	0	0	0
FATALITIES:	0	0	0
OTHER:	-	-	-

DESCRIPTION OF OTHER: n/a.

ACTION: An Engineering Analysis has been opened.

Investigator: *[Signature]*

DIV. CHF: *[Signature]*

OFC. DIR: *[Signature]*

DATE: 10/22/02

DATE: 10/21/02

DATE: 10-22-02

SUMMARY: On June 24, 1996, GM filed a Defect Information Report concerning a condition that could result in engine compartment fire in approximately 276,000 model year (MY) 1996 GM 88, 98, Bonneville, Park Avenue, Regal, and Riviera and MY 1996 through 1997 LeSabre passenger cars equipped with 3.8L V6 (GM "L36") engines and built between July 1, 1995 and May 1, 1996 (NHTSA Recall No. 96V-116, GM Recall No. 97-C-02).

According to GM, if a backfire occurs during engine startup, the intake manifold could break and possibly cause an engine compartment fire. GM's recall remedy involved updating the Powertrain Control Module (PCM) programming to reduce the risk of a backfire event, in accordance with a production change implemented in May 1996. Pending completion of repairs, GM warned consumers to keep the hood closed whenever starting the engine to reduce the risk of personal injury.

ODI opened PE02-050 based on 44 complaints of backfire related engine compartment fires in MY 1996 through 2000 GM passenger cars equipped with the same 3.8L V6 engines that were the subject of 96V-116. Documents furnished by GM in response to PE02-050 indicate that it has implemented three design changes to address concerns with backfire incidents in the subject vehicle population.

continued

2 VCS
10/31/02