



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 03-049
Prompted By: CONSUMER COMPLAINTS
Date Opened: 10/23/2003 Date Closed: 02/19/2004
Principal Investigator: TOM BOWMAN
Subject: TAILGATE CABLE BREAKAGE

Manufacturer: GENERAL MOTORS CORP.
Products: 1999 - 2002 GM SILVERADO PICKUP TRUCKS
Population: 4449100

Problem Description: WHEN THE TAILGATE IS IN THE OPEN (HORIZONTAL) POSITION, ONE OR BOTH TAILGATE SUPPORT CABLES CAN BREAK, DROPPING THE TAILGATE-SUPPORTED INDIVIDUAL AND/OR CARGO TO THE GROUND WITHOUT WARNING

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	82	430	489
Crashes/Fires:	0	0	0
Injury Incidents:	19	88	104
# Injuries:	20	96	113
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	61025	61025

*Description of Other: WARRANTY CLAIMS

Action: THIS PE IS BEING UPGRADED TO AN ENGINEERING ANALYSIS.

Engineer: Thomas Bowman
Div. Chief: Richard Boyd
Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 02/19/2004
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Summary: DURING THE PE, ODI DISCOVERED THAT ONE OR BOTH OF THE TAILGATE SUPPORT CABLES CAN BREAK DUE TO THE EFFECTS OF METAL FATIGUE AT THE POINT WHERE THE CABLE FLEXES WHEN THE LIFT GATE IS OPENED AND CLOSED. CONCURRENTLY, THE STRENGTH OF THE CABLE DEGRADES OVER TIME DUE TO CORROSION OF THE WIRE STRANDS IN THE SUPPORT CABLES. WHEN THE VEHICLE IS STATIONARY AND CARGO IS BEING LOADED OR UNLOADED, THE TAILGATE CAN TIP DOWNWARD DISPLACING CARGO AND/OR PEOPLE TO THE GROUND WITHOUT WARNING. ODI IS ALSO AWARE OF ONE TOTAL SEPARATION OF THE TAILGATE FROM THE VEHICLE. OWNERS CANNOT EASILY DETECT WHETHER THE SUPPORT CABLES ARE DAMAGED OR CORRODED BECAUSE THEY ARE COVERED BY A PROTECTIVE SHEATH. ODI IS UPGRADEING THIS PRELIMINARY EVALUATION FOR FURTHER APPROPRIATE ACTION. MODEL YEAR 2003 VEHICLES WILL BE ADDED TO THE INVESTIGATION. FURTHER, WE WILL INCLUDE ADDITIONAL VEHICLES, THOSE BEING THE AVALANCHE AND CADILLAC EXT, MODEL YEARS 2002-2003, AND THE SIERRA, MODEL YEARS 1999-2003.