



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

## ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE03-059  
Prompted By: IE03-068  
Date Opened: 12/30/2003 Date Closed: 03/19/2004  
Principal Investigator: Peter Kivett  
Subject: Engine stall

Manufacturer: Saab Cars USA, Inc.  
Products: 2003 Saab 9-3 with automatic transmission  
Population: 18,357

Problem Description: The engine may stall during certain driving maneuvers.

### FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	19	540	553
Crashes:	1	1	1
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
# Injuries:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	2,964	2,964

\*Description of Other: Warranty claims for ECM - repair/replace/reprogram

Action: This Preliminary Evaluation has been upgraded to an Engineering Analysis.

Engineer: Peter Kivett  
Div. Chief: Jeffrey L. Quandt  
Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 03/19/2004  
Date: 03/19/2004  
Date: 03/19/2004

**SUMMARY:** The subject vehicles are equipped with automatic transmissions and turbocharged engines with two different power outputs, 175 hp and 210 hp. Saab has modified the electronic control module (ECM) software in the subject vehicles to correct problems that could result in engine stall in both engines.

In January 2003, Saab disabled the dual mass flywheel (DMF) protection (intended only for manual transmission vehicles) in subject vehicles with 175 hp engines. According to Saab, DMF protection in a vehicle with automatic transmission may cause the engine to stall when releasing the accelerator pedal when coming to a stop or when the vehicle is coasting.

In August 2003, Saab revised the ECM software in the 210 hp engines to address a concern with engine stall during "aborted take-off" maneuvers. According to Saab, "aborted take-off" stalls occur when the vehicle is stationary and in drive gear, the engine is idling, and the accelerator pedal is pulsed (pressed quickly and released in less than one second).

There have been 553 non-duplicative complaints to ODI and Saab alleging engine stall in the subject vehicles. There is one reported crash and no injuries. Saab initiated a customer satisfaction program in early February to reprogram the ECM's. Saab reported that 36% of the vehicles had been serviced in the program as of March 9, 2004. This investigation has been upgraded to an Engineering Analysis to further assess the alleged defect in the subject vehicles and Saab's actions to address the problems.

VKT  
3-19-04