



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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 04-081
Date Opened: 12/16/2004 Date Closed: 04/01/2005
Principal Investigator: Peter C. Ong
Subject: Inadvertent Side-Airbag Deployment

Manufacturer: Volkswagen of America, Inc.
Products: MY 2001-2003 Volkswagen Jetta, Golf and GTI vehicles
Population: 473,745

Problem Description: Alleged side-thorax and side-head curtain airbag deployments without a crash

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	109	373	482
Crashes/Fires:	0	0	0
Injury Incidents:	21	75	96
# Injuries:	22	75	97
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	17	17

*Description of Other: Non-duplicate warranty claims

Action: This Preliminary Evaluation is closed

Engineer: Peter C. Ong pco

Date: 04/01/2005

Div. Chief: Thomas Z. Cooper

Date: 04/01/2005

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 04/01/2005

Summary: The subject vehicles are equipped with side-thorax and side-head curtain airbags to protect the front and rear outboard occupants in a side-impact crash. This investigation identified a total of 499 reports (482 owners reports and 17 warranty claims). The crash sensing system's algorithm may recognize certain non-crash impacts (wheel, tire and undercarriage impacts) as deployable events. The 97 alleged injuries were minor in nature and consist of abrasions, bruises, ear ringing and headaches. There was no alleged loss of control crash as a result of side-airbag deployment. ODI also obtained counts of alleged inadvertent side-airbag deployments from peer manufacturers. The data shows that the subject vehicles are not unique in being subject to such allegations. The complaint rate for non-subject individual model vehicles varies widely. The rate for the subject vehicles is comparable to three peer models, each with compact chassis/wheelbases. ODI has not identified any component failure or manufacturing trend that may relate to a component or manufacturing issue.

A safety-related defect trend has not been identified at this time. Further use of agency resources does not appear to be warranted. Accordingly, this investigation is closed. The closing of this investigation does not constitute finding by NHTSA that a safety-related defect does not exist. The agency will take further action if warranted by the circumstances.

FAP pco