



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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: EA 04-005
Prompted By: CONSUMER COMPLAINTS
Date Opened: 02/19/2004
Principal Investigator: TOM BOWMAN
Subject: TAILGATE CABLE BREAKAGE

Manufacturer: GENERAL MOTORS CORP.
Products: 1999-2003 SILVERADO & SIERRA / 2002-2003 AVALANCHE & CAD EXT
Population: 4449100

Problem Description: When the tailgate is in the open (horizontal) position, one or both tailgate support cables can break causing the supported individual and/or cargo to drop 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: OPEN AN ENGINEERING ANALYSIS

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

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Summary: 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. The majority of known injuries have resulted from the tailgate downward tip. One ODI complaint reported that the tailgate separated from a moving vehicle.

Owners cannot easily detect whether the support cables are damaged or corroded because a protective plastic sheath covers the cables.

MLB
2/23/04