



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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: EA 05-008
Prompted By: RQ04-012
Date Opened: 04/14/2005
Principal Investigator: Tom Bowman
Subject: Tailgate Support Cable(s) Break

Manufacturer: General Motors Corp.
Products: General Motors 1998 - 2004 Sonoma and S-10
Population: 1433901

Problem Description: When the tailgate is in the open (horizontal) position, one or both of the 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:	125	624	749
Crashes/Fires:	0	0	0
Injury Incidents:	15	14	29
# Injuries:	15	14	29
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	0	0

*Description Of Other:

Action: Open an Engineering Analysis.

Engineer: Thomas Bowman

Date: 04/14/2005

Div. Chief: Richard Boyd

Date: 04/14/2005

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 04/14/2005

Summary: ODI is closing RQ04-012 and opening this EA to investigate the tailgate support cables installed in 1998 - 2004 model year Sonoma and S10 model vehicles.

General Motors is conducting Recall Campaign 04V-129 to replace the tailgate support cables originally installed in certain model year 2000-2004 Sierras and Silverados and certain model year 2002-2004 Avalanches and Escalade EXTs (C/K models).

General Motors has advised ODI that the tailgate support cables installed in these vehicles were fabricated using identical or similar sheathing material as the model year 2000 - 2004 C/K models described above and that the material used for the tailgate cable sheathing installed in C/K models had inadvertently changed in October, 1999 after which the coating had a propensity to leave voids in and around the galvanized cable strands which allows moisture to wick among the strands leading to oxidation and weakening of these strands.

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General Motors has advised ODI that Sonoma and S10 vehicles differ from C/K models in several ways: the vehicle height is lower; the tailgate displacement (drop) when not supported by the cables is smaller and the tailgate comes to rest at a less severe tip angle when not supported by the cables; the tailgate mass is smaller; and the size, payload, and usage characteristics are less demanding than C/K model vehicles. GM also stated that Sonoma and S10 warranty claim information indicates a lower claim count and a lower claim rate than campaigned C/K models.

Notwithstanding the above information, ODI has received an additional 73 non-injury complaints and 10 injury complaints during RQ04-012 (since November 2004 to date) which justifies opening an Engineering Analysis to further investigate this issue.

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