



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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 06-012

Date Opened: 03/08/2006

Date Closed: 06/15/2006

Principal Investigator: Sonny Murianka

Subject: Electrical Panel Fires

Manufacturer: Freightliner LLC

Products: 2004-2006 Thomas Built EF, HDX, FS-65 School Buses

Population: 11555

Problem Description: Electrical panel fires result in vehicles stalling and certain electrical safety devices becoming inoperative.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	4	64	64
Crashes/Fires:	4	64	64
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
# Injuries:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	0	0

*Description of Other:

Action: This Preliminary Evaluation is closed. Freightliner has submitted a safety recall. The assigned campaign number is 06V-136.

Engineer: Sonny Murianka

Date: 06/15/2006

Div. Chief: Richard Boyd

Date: 06/15/2006

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 06/15/2006

Summary: This investigation was opened based on four allegations of school bus fires in the Power Distribution Module (PDM) area of the subject buses. During the investigation, ODI learned that buses built between October 4, 2004 and February 14, 2006 were equipped with PDM's manufactured with copper circuits that were too thin for the electrical loads encountered, creating overheating and thermal events. Also, it was determined that multiple thermal breakers, clustered together on the PDM, together with heat generated from the PDM can generate enough heat to melt the PDM.

On April 21, 2006, Freightliner filed a safety recall to address this issue. Freightliner's remedy is to replace all the original (thin copper circuit) PDM's with new improved PDM's having thicker copper circuits. Also, Freightliner will replace the thermal breakers with non-thermal breaker or fuses.

The recall action taken by Freightliner resolves the issues raised by this investigation. This investigation is closed.

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