



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

# ODI RESUME

Investigation: EA 06-018  
Prompted By: PE06-021  
Date Opened: 10/30/2006  
Principal Investigator: Chris Lash  
Subject: Crossmember Corrosion Failure

Manufacturer: General Motors Corp.  
Products: 1999-2004 Chevrolet Tracker in salt belt  
Population: 140,000 (estimated)

Problem Description: The front suspension crossmember may corrode from the inside and fail. A broken crossmember may cause the suspension and or steering box to become detached from the vehicle, resulting in a loss of vehicle control.

## FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	3	27	30
Crashes/Fires:	0	0	0
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
# Injuries:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	15	15

\*Description Of Other: GM warranty claims.

Action: An Engineering Analysis has been opened.

Engineer: Christopher Lash *Chris Lash*  
Div. Chief: Jeffrey L. Quandt  
Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

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Summary: On September 15th, 2006 General Motors (GM) submitted information regarding approximately 128,000 model year (MY) 1999 -2001 Chevrolet Tracker vehicles. According to GM, these vehicles were manufactured with front crossmembers designed and made by Suzuki that can rust from the inside out because of insufficient corrosion protection. The design of the crossmember limited the coverage of paint on the interior surfaces during the painting process. In March 2006 Suzuki made design changes to the crossmember to enhance the coverage of paint to the inside of the part.

GM indicated that when operated in areas of the country that use road salt for de-icing, over time water and salt/mud can accumulate inside the crossmember and cause crevice corrosion that can lead to perforation. These perforations at the front control arm brackets can cause the front suspension to become partially detached from the vehicle.

GM provided vehicle test data showing that crossmembers that fail in this manner do not cause a loss of vehicle control and, therefore, do not represent an unreasonable risk to motor vehicle safety. This investigation has been upgraded to an engineering analysis to further assess the safety consequences associated with the alleged defect condition.