



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

## ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE08-051  
Date Opened: 08/28/2008 Date Closed: 12/23/2008  
Principal Investigator: Kyle Bowker  
Subject: Front Suspension Coil Spring Fracture

Manufacturer: General Motors Corp., Saab Cars USA, Inc.  
Products: 2003-2006 Saab 9-3 in salt belt states  
Population: 61,861 (Estimated)

Problem Description: Alleged front suspension coil spring fracture, which may result in tire puncture, loss of inflation pressure, and subsequent loss of vehicle control.

### FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

|                     | ODI | Manufacturer | Total |
|---------------------|-----|--------------|-------|
| Complaints:         | 10  | 45           | 53    |
| 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   | 1,218        | 1,218 |

\*Description Of Other: Warranty claims paid to repair fractured coil springs.

Action: This Preliminary Evaluation has been upgraded to an Engineering Analysis (EA08-026).

Engineer: Kyle M. Bowker KMB

Date: 12/23/2008

Div. Chief: Jeffrey L. Quandt

Date: 12/23/2008

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 12/23/2008

Summary: On August 28, 2008, the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) opened a Preliminary Evaluation (PE08-051) to investigate alleged front suspension coil spring fractures in certain model year (MY) 2003-2004 Saab 9-3 vehicles sold or registered in "salt belt" states. (Note: for purposes of this investigation, the "salt belt" includes Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia and Wisconsin). Subsequent analysis of data provided by General Motors Corp. (GM) has led the agency to expand the scope of this investigation to include all MY 2003-2006 Saab 9-3 vehicles sold or registered in "salt belt" states.

To date, ODI is aware of 53 non-duplicative complaints and/or field reports that allege coil spring fracture in the subject vehicles, including 23 alleging the fractured spring damaged a tire, with 16 of those involving a tire puncture. Analysis of warranty data provided by GM identified 1,218 claims paid to repair subject vehicles that experienced the alleged defect, of which 138 vehicles also suffered damage to the adjacent tire and of those, 79 vehicles experienced a tire puncture. ODI is not aware of any crashes or injuries related to the alleged defect.

GM made several design changes to the coil springs and/or McPherson strut assemblies used in the subject vehicles in an apparent effort to address the alleged defect condition. However, GM maintains that the subject vehicles remain well controlled in the event of tire puncture, that the rate of tire puncture incidents related to coil spring fractures is low, and that the alleged defect does not pose an unreasonable risk to motor vehicle safety. Accordingly, this investigation has been upgraded to an Engineering Analysis (EA08-026) to further study the safety consequences of the alleged defect.