



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 09-055
Date Opened: 12/07/2009 **Date Closed:** 04/21/2010
Principal Investigator: Bruce York-B
Subject: HVAC Switch Failures

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: FORD MOTOR COMPANY
Products: 1997-2008 E350/450 Ford Cab/Chassis
Population: 1,076,975
Problem Description: The blower switch on certain Ford E350/450 vehicles may overheat/melt and catch fire.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	1	55	56
Crashes/Fires:	1	55	56
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
Other*:	182	0	182

***Description of Other:** Failures by 4 fleets where the blower motor switch melted, smoked, burned or experienced open flame.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: The preliminary evaluation has been upgraded to an Engineering Analysis (EA10-003).

Summary:

ODI has received 1 complaint and reports from 4 transportation fleets alleging 182 switch failures. Each fleet operates mini buses built on a Ford E350 or E450 cutaway chassis. The OEM HVAC blower switches have melted, smoked, burned or experienced open flame and become inoperable on vehicles in each fleet. Some drivers have reported a burning smell or smoke coming from the dash.

One fleet reported a vehicle fire. No injuries were sustained. However, the bus was carrying special needs children when the driver noticed smoke coming from the dash. The driver was able to evacuate the children prior to the vehicle becoming engulfed in flames.

This PE has been upgraded to an Engineering Analysis (EA) to determine if the blower motor switch failures create a situation where a vehicle fire is possible and presents a safety risk to the driver and other passengers.