



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 10-023
Date Opened: 07/12/2010
Investigator: Michael Lee
Approver: Frank Borris
Subject: Fuel Spill During Refueling

Date Closed: 12/21/2011
Reviewer: Scott Yon

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: KIA MOTORS CORPORATION
Products: MY 2003 Kia Sorento
Population: 42,831

Problem Description: Fuel spills out or spits back from the filler port during refueling.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	18	121	139
Crashes/Fires:	0	0	0
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	681	681

*Description of Other: Warranty Claims

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: Close this Preliminary Evaluation.

Summary:

Complaints allege that while refueling the vehicle, fuel can spill out or spit back from the fuel filler port on model year (MY) 2003 Kia Sorento vehicles (subject vehicles). Consumers report that the spilled fuel can splash on the person fueling the vehicle, or on the side of the vehicle and the ground. The subject vehicles are equipped with an evaporative emissions control system that, among other things, manages air exchange between the fuel tank and the atmosphere in an environmentally safe manner. The system consists of a vapor canister, various control valves and tubing, and a canister filter (fuel tank air filter) through which the air that flows in and out of the fuel tank must pass. Kia's testing found that if the canister filter becomes significantly clogged, excess pressure can build up in the fuel tank and cause fuel to spit back from the filler port during refueling.

Kia has stated that the canister filter requires regularly scheduled service maintenance; however, the component is not listed as a maintenance item in the owner's or service manual for the subject vehicles. ODI notes that Kia does list the filter on the maintenance schedule in the owner's manual for MY 2005 and newer Kia Sorento vehicles. To address the issue of fuel spit back during refueling, Kia will conduct a service campaign of approximately 86,000 MY 2003 and 2004 Kia Sorento vehicles. The campaign will provide a one-time replacement of the canister filter, at no cost to the owner. Kia will begin notifying the affected owners in late January 2012 and will inform the owners that the filter must be serviced at regular intervals. Kia will also provide an updated service maintenance schedule. Consumers should refer to the service campaign bulletin number SC092 available in the investigative file.

A safety-related defect trend has not been identified at this time and further use of agency resources does not appear to be warranted. Accordingly, this investigation is closed. The closing of this investigation does not constitute a finding by NHTSA that no safety-related defect exists. The agency will monitor the issue and reserves the right to take future action if warranted by the circumstances.