



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 11-040
Date Opened: 12/14/2011
Investigator: Emily Reichard
Approver: Bruce York-B
Subject: Fuel Filler Pipe Corrosion/Leakage

Date Closed: 08/16/2012
Reviewer: Scott Yon

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: General Motors LLC
Products: MY 2003-2004 Chevrolet Express and GMC Savana
Population: 10,160
Problem Description: The fuel filler pipe may corrode and leak fuel, which poses a fire hazard.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	12	27	39
Crashes/Fires:	0	0	0
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	76	76

***Description of Other:** Warranty claims that may relate to filler pipe corrosion

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: This Preliminary Evaluation is closed. A safety recall (12V388) will be conducted.

Summary:

On August 7, 2012 General Motors (GM) notified the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) that it will conduct a safety related recall for model year (MY) 2003-2004 Chevrolet Express and GMC Savana vehicles. The recall affects vehicles equipped with a left side cargo door and that were originally sold or currently registered in the corrosion or "salt-belt" states of Connecticut, Delaware, 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. Dealers are to install a new fuel filler neck. Consumer notification letters will be sent in early October 2012, when sufficient parts are available.

ODI has received 12 complaints alleging unique incidents of fuel leakage during refueling of a subject vehicle. Eleven of the complaints occurred on Chevrolet Express vans, and 1 of the complaints involved a GMC Savana. All vehicles were equipped with the left side cargo door option. For vehicles so equipped, water and road debris can become trapped in the protective conduit that covers the fuel filler pipe and may subsequently cause the pipe to corrode. If the corrosion creates a significant perforation in the pipe, fuel may leak onto the ground while refueling the vehicle. An illuminated Check Engine light (on some vehicles) or the presence of fuel odor may also act as precursors to fuel leakage. Fuel in the presence of an ignition source could cause a fire to occur.

In their response to ODI's information request, GM reported 24 owner reports and 1 field report alleging fuel filler pipe failure/corrosion in the subject vehicle population. Six additional records were also provided that included the replacement of the fuel filler pipe, however not enough information existed to determine a relation to the alleged problem. After further review of the reports, ODI determined that a total of 27 individual GM reports were related to filler pipe corrosion.

The complaints received from both ODI and GM primarily occurred in the corrosion states. During the investigation,

the scope of the subject vehicle population was expanded to include MY 2004 Express vans, and MY 2003 and 2004 GMC Savana vans (with V6 engines) also equipped with left hand side door options, since the Savana vans also utilize the same, or substantially similar fuel filler pipe configuration. GM subsequently modified the design of the fuel filler pipe on vehicles equipped with side doors to correct the corrosion concern, so these vehicles do not have the defect issue.

The affected vehicle population shown above reflects the total number of vehicles registered in the salt-belt states listed in GM's defect information report (DIR). Prior to the safety recall announcement, GM had issued a special coverage adjustment for vehicles in these states, during which a total of 771 repairs were made. Accordingly the vehicle population noted in the DIR reflects that of the remaining vehicle population. The investigation is closed based on GM's announcement of safety recall 12V388.

The reports cited above can be reviewed online at www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/complaints under the following identification (ODI) numbers: 10463398, 10459328, 10456403, 10453725, 10445925, 10443143, 10441615, 10413568, 10413214, 10411911, 10353717, 10259377.