

**GM SERVICE AND PARTS OPERATIONS**  
**DCS1161**  
**URGENT - DISTRIBUTE IMMEDIATELY**

**Date:** March 18, 2004

**Subject:** Upcoming Safety Recall  
04007 – Tailgate Support Cable Corrosion

**Models:** 2000-2004 Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra  
2002-2004 Chevrolet Avalanche and Cadillac Escalade EXT

**To:** All Chevrolet, GMC and Cadillac Dealers

**Attention:** Dealer Operator, General Manager, Sales Manager, Used Car Manager,  
Service Manager, Parts Manager and Warranty Administrator

Based on information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) web site, the media may report that General Motors will be announcing a safety recall involving certain 2000-2004 model year Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra full size pickup trucks and 2002-2004 model year Chevrolet Avalanche and Cadillac Escalade EXT sport utility trucks.

On some of these vehicles, the galvanized steel tailgate support cables that retain the tailgate in the full open (horizontal) position may corrode, weaken, and eventually fracture. If one cable fractures, the remaining cable may retain the tailgate in a horizontal position. However, if the remaining cable is sufficiently weakened by corrosion, it could fracture within moments of the first cable fracturing, especially if there is a load on the tailgate. If both cables fractured the tailgate would suddenly drop and strike the top surface of the rear bumper. Anyone sitting or standing on the horizontal surface of the tailgate when both cables fractured could be injured by falling from the tailgate. On vehicles that have had the bumper removed, the tailgate may drop even lower. Additionally, if there is cargo on the tailgate, the cargo may fall off if the support cables fracture.

To correct this condition, the existing galvanized support cables will be replaced with stainless steel support cables. Of course, this repair will be performed at no cost to customers.

There are approximately 4.1 million vehicles involved. GM is working with its suppliers to obtain the parts needed to correct this condition as quickly as possible. Based on the anticipated schedule, we plan to begin notifying customers about this recall during the third quarter of 2004. **GMVIS information will not be available until the recall is formally announced.**

Listed below are some anticipated questions and answers to assist in responding to customer inquiries.

**Q1: What is the condition that prompted a safety recall?**

**A1:** Some 2000-2004 model year Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra full-size pickup trucks and 2002-2004 model year Chevrolet Avalanche and Cadillac Escalade EXT sport utility trucks may have corroded galvanized steel tailgate support cables that retain the tailgate in the full open (horizontal) position.

**Q2: What might occur as a result of this condition?**

**A2:** One or both of the tailgate support cables may fracture when loads are applied to the tailgate when the gate is open.

**Q3: What would happen if the tailgate support cables fracture?**

**A3:** If one cable fractures, the remaining cable may retain the tailgate in a horizontal position. If the remaining cable was sufficiently weakened by corrosion, it could fracture within moments of the first cable fracturing, especially if there is a load on the tailgate. If both cables fractured the tailgate would suddenly drop and strike the top surface of the rear bumper.

**Q4: Is there a reason to be concerned about this condition?**

**A4:** If both cables fracture, the tailgate outer panel may be damaged by the rear impact with the bumper. Anyone sitting or standing on the horizontal surface of the tailgate when both cables fractured could be injured by falling from the tailgate. If the owner has removed the bumper, the tailgate may drop to a lower position. If there is cargo on the tailgate, the cargo may fall off if the support cables fracture.

**Q5: How would a customer realize the condition exists?**

**A5:** Tailgate support cable corrosion may not be visible because of a black plastic sheathing covering the cable. In some cases, the sheathing may be damaged with the cable corrosion visible. There may be a bulge in the sheathing that may indicate fractured cable strands. There also may be a thinning or "necking down" of the plastic sheath.

**Q6: How are the support cables corroding?**

**A6:** Moisture and environmental contaminants may enter between the metal strands of the cable at either end of the cable and be retained within the galvanized strands due to the plastic wrap on the cable. In some cases, the black plastic sheathing may become cracked or torn during normal usage creating a path for moisture entry. Moisture may collect and concentrate near the center of the cable, which is the lowest point while the gate is closed. During normal usage of the tailgate, the cable is flexed at the midpoint. Repeated flexing, plus corrosion caused by the moisture and contaminants, may weaken the metal strands, and they can eventually sever under load.

- Q7: Why didn't GM take precautions to prevent corrosion in the support cables?**
- A7:** GM took several precautions to prevent corrosion. The plastic wrap, which has been in use for several years, is protective insulation to keep out moisture. An epoxy sealant was added to each end of the bare strands of the cables to deter moisture from entering.
- Q8: Have there been any reports of crashes, injuries, or fatalities related to this condition?**
- A8:** There have been no reports of crashes or fatalities due to the condition. There are reports of 134 minor injuries.
- Q9: How was this condition discovered?**
- A9:** GM learned of the condition through the investigation of warranty data in 2003. In October 2003, NHTSA issued a preliminary evaluation defect investigation. GM cooperated in this investigation.
- Q10: Why are you not recalling all 2004 models?**
- A10:** In October 2003, GM began using stainless steel material on all tailgate cables of full-size pickup and sport utility trucks.
- Q11: Why are you not recalling any models prior to 2000?**
- A11:** Even though galvanized cables were used on some vehicles built prior to the 2000 model year, data from our investigation does not support their inclusion in this recall.
- Q12: Why did GM begin using stainless steel tailgate cables?**
- A12:** This change was made to improve the corrosion resistance of the cable.
- Q13: What will GM do to remedy this condition on the subject vehicles?**
- A13:** The existing galvanized support cables will be replaced with stainless steel support cables. This repair will be performed at no cost to customers.
- Q14: Are parts at the dealers, and can customers bring in their vehicles for repair right away?**
- A14:** No. Due to the large number of vehicles involved in this recall, the replacement cables will not be available immediately. However, in the meantime, GM will advise customers to avoid applying direct loads to the tailgate until the cables can be inspected and, if necessary, replaced. The notification and repair process will occur in phases. During the third quarter of 2004, GM will begin notifying the first round of customers involved in this recall. GM will continue this cadence of notification and replacement throughout the year until all vehicles receive the stainless steel support cables.
- Q15: Why are you waiting until the third quarter 2004 to conduct this recall?**
- A15:** Large quantities of replacement cables will not be available until then.

**Q16: What if customers experience a fracture of the tailgate support cables before they get the recall letter?**

**A16:** If a customer experiences a fracture of the tailgate support cables, the customer should contact their dealer to arrange for repair as soon as possible. A limited supply of replacement cables is available from GMSPD and dealers should replace both tailgate support cables. This service should be performed at no cost to the customer using labor operation B5750 until the recall is officially announced during the third quarter of 2004. For vehicles that are beyond warranty coverage, dealer empowerment guidelines for goodwill adjustments should be applied.

**Q17: Are the vehicles involved in this recall safe to drive?**

**A17:** All the vehicles involved in this recall are safe to drive. The condition does not impact the safe operation of the vehicle. However, care should be taken not to apply loads directly on the tailgate until the cables can be inspected and, if necessary, replaced.

Please contact the GM Dealer Business Center at 1-888-414-6322 (Prompt #3) if you have questions about this message.

**END OF MESSAGE  
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