

March 2004

Dear General Motors Customer:

This notice is sent to you in accordance with the requirements of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act. Federal regulation requires that any vehicle lessor receiving this recall notice must forward a copy of this notice to the lessee within ten days.

General Motors has decided that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety, exists in certain 1998 through 2001 model year Chevrolet Cavalier and Pontiac Sunfire vehicles, and 1998 model year Buick Skylark, Oldsmobile Achieva, and Pontiac Grand Am vehicles. If the engine fails to start and the driver holds the key in the "start" position for an extended period, high current flows through the ignition switch, and sometimes produces enough heat to melt internal switch parts. If the switch is damaged, a fire could occur in the steering column, even with the engine off and the key removed. The fire could spread to the interior of the car, which could injure occupants of the car or cause damage to adjoining structures.

The purpose of this letter is to explain this product safety recall, what GM is doing to correct it, and what you can do immediately to reduce the potential for a fire and its consequences. Customers who have experienced this problem usually report that they recently had problems starting their cars. While most of the fires occurred within minutes of an unsuccessful attempt to start the car, others occurred after the car had been unattended for a longer time. If you are experiencing problems starting your car, have it repaired promptly and do not leave the car in a building.

Please know that we understand the concern this may cause and the need to correct it as quickly as we can. Until we are able to install a relay kit in your car that will prevent high current from flowing through the ignition switch, there are two very important precautions you can take to reduce the potential for a fire:

- Do not hold the key in the "start" position if the starter does not immediately begin cranking the engine. A low battery charge and other starting system problems can create a situation where the driver turns the key to the "start" position and nothing happens other than a clicking sound. If that happens, turn the key back to "off" immediately. Holding the key in "start" longer will not help to start the car, but can cause damage to the ignition switch that can eventually lead to a fire.
- If you encounter difficulty starting your car, have it repaired promptly to minimize the potential for damage to the ignition switch. The ignition switch in your vehicle may become damaged and the damage could lead to a fire if you:
  - (1) have a failing battery and do not replace it promptly and

- (2) experience "click" with no start three or more times and
- (3) jump-start the car three or more times

**What GM Is Doing:** Your GM dealer will (1) install a relay kit that will prevent high current from flowing through the ignition switch and (2) check that your car will start with a properly charged battery and, if necessary, replace the ignition switch. These services will be performed for you at no charge. Battery replacement and other normal maintenance, however, are not covered by this recall.

**Contacting Your Dealer:** To limit any possible inconvenience, we recommend that you contact your GM dealer as soon as possible to schedule an appointment for this repair. By scheduling an appointment, your dealer can ensure that the necessary parts will be available on your schedule appointment date. Should your dealer be unable to schedule a service date within a reasonable time, you should contact the appropriate Customer Assistance Center at the listed number below:

Division	Number	Text Telephones (TTY)
Buick	1-866-608-8080	1-800-832-8425
Chevrolet	1-800-630-2438	1-800-833-2438
Pontiac	1-800-620-7668	1-800-833-7668
Oldsmobile	1-800-630-6537	1-800-833-6537
Puerto Rico – English	1-800-496-9992	
Puerto Rico – Español	1-800-496-9993	
Virgin Islands	1-800-496-9994	

If, after contacting the appropriate Customer Assistance Center, you are still not satisfied that we have done our best to remedy this condition without charge and within a reasonable time, you may wish to write the Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590 or call 1-888-327-4236.

**How Long Will The Repair Take?** This service correction will take approximately 1 to 1-1/2 hours. However, due to service scheduling requirements, your dealer may need your vehicle for a longer period of time.

**Customer Reimbursement:** The enclosed form explains what reimbursement is available and how to request reimbursement if you have paid for repairs for the recall condition.

**Customer Reply Card:** The attached customer reply card identifies your vehicle. Presentation of this card to your dealer will assist in making the necessary correction in the shortest possible time. If you no longer own this vehicle, please let us know by completing the attached and mailing it in the postage paid envelope.

**Recall Information Online:** More information about this recall (including answers to frequently asked questions) is available online at the Owner Center at My GMLink. This free online service offers vehicle and ownership-related

Information and tools tailored to your specific vehicle. To join, visit [www.mygmlink.com](http://www.mygmlink.com) and enter your car's Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), shown on the attached card, to get the most personalized information for your vehicle.

We are sorry to cause you this inconvenience; however, we have taken this action in the interest of your safety and continued satisfaction with our products.

General Motors Corporation

Enclosure