



September 13, 2005

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(3 pages)

Mr. Ronald Medford
Senior Associate Administrator, Vehicle Safety
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W., Room 5321
Washington, D.C. 20590

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NHTSA-215
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OFFICE OF
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

Dear Mr. Medford:

The following information is submitted pursuant to the requirements of 49 CFR 573.6 as it applies to a determination by General Motors of a safety defect involving certain 2000-2002 Saab 9-3 and 9-5 model vehicles equipped with B205/B235 4 cylinder gasoline engines, and 2001 9-5 models equipped with B308 6 cylinder gasoline engines.

573.6(c)(1): Saab Automobile AB, a subsidiary of General Motors Corporation (GM), the designated agent for Saab.

573.6(c)(2)(3)(4): This information is shown on the attached sheet.

573.6(c)(5): General Motors has decided that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety exists in certain 2000-2002 Saab 9-3 and 9-5 model vehicles equipped with B205/B235 4 cylinder gasoline engines, and 2001 9-5 models equipped with B308 6 cylinder gasoline engines. Certain vehicles within these populations may experience overheating and burnout of the isolated gated bipolar transistor (IGBT) within the ignition discharge module (IDM) due to increased susceptibility to electrical loads. Overheating of the IGBT occurs most often at engine start-up for both a 4 cylinder and 6 cylinder engine, but it may also occur while the engine is running. When the IDM fails on a 4 cylinder while it is running, the engine may stall without warning, with no ability to be restarted.

When the IDM fails on a 6 cylinder engine while it is running, the driver will initially experience reduced power and rough operation because the engine will only be running on three cylinders. The check engine light will flash. If the driver continues, unburnt fuel in the exhaust can cause thermal damage to the catalytic converter. The engine may stall and not restart. Thermal damage to other underhood components and the underbody may also result from prolonged driving. A sustained vehicle fire is unlikely and GM knows of none.

573.6(c)(6): From March 1999 through April 2003, SEM AB, the supplier of the IDM, and GM Powertrain - Europe (GMPT-E) used data obtained from the "burn-in" procedure followed for every manufactured IDM unit and the testing of field return parts to identify and eliminate several quality and reliability issues with the IDM used in the model years 1999 through 2003. The predominant customer complaint was a no-start condition and these efforts were pursued to improve customer satisfaction. Several manufacturing and product-related changes resulted from the analysis efforts and were grouped into "Quality Packages" that were implemented between November 2000 and July 2002. Quality Package 3 (QP3), which was introduced on July 4, 2002 for 4 cylinder components and January 7, 2003 for 6 cylinder components, reduced the overall IDM replacement rates to a low rate. Among the changes introduced with QP3 were additional circuit protection against electrical overload and a larger transistor capsule to improve heat transfer from the component.



On April 7, 2005, GM received an Information Request from NHTSA based on customer allegations of engine stalling. GM and Saab conducted an investigation into the owner complaints and warranty information available and determined that stalling may result from a failure of the IGBT within the IDM. GM responded to NHTSA on June 8, 2005 and explained it was re-evaluating the risk associated with the stalling condition under new standards imposed by NHTSA and the risk assessment framework developed by GM.

The resulting risk assessment was presented to the General Motors North America Powertrain (GMPT) Field Performance Evaluation Review Committee (FPERC) on August 24, 2005. On September 8, 2005, the General Motors Europe Executive Field Action Decision Committee (EFADC) decided to conduct a safety recall for the models and model years described in this letter covering Europe. On September 12, 2005, the GMNA EFADC decided to conduct this safety recall in the United States.

573.6(c)(8): Dealers will inspect to see what version IDM is in the vehicle and replace the IDM if it is a version built prior to the introduction of QP3.

Pursuant to 577.11(e), GM will provide reimbursement to owners for repairs completed on or before ten days after the owner mailing is completed, according to the plan submitted on January 14, 2005.

573.6(c)(9): A preliminary owner letter will be mailed in October 2005 to inform owners of this condition. GM anticipates having parts available in early March 2006 and will send a draft dealer bulletin and owner letter when available.

Sincerely,



Gay P. Kent
Director

Product Investigations

VEHICLES POTENTIALLY AFFECTED BY MAKE, MODEL, AND MODEL YEAR
PLUS INCLUSIVE DATES OF MANUFACTURE

<u>MAKE</u>	<u>MODEL SERIES</u>	<u>MODEL YEAR</u>	<u>NUMBER INVOLVED</u>	<u>INCLUSIVE MANUFACTURING DATES</u> (FROM) (TO)		<u>DESCRIPTIVE INFO. TO PROPERLY IDENT. VEH.</u>	<u>EST. NO. W/CONDITION</u>
Saab	9-3	2000	17,757	6/1999	6/2000	4 Cylinder	* Unknown
Saab	9-3	2001	20,767	6/2000	6/2001	4 Cylinder	"
Saab	9-3	2002	17,954	6/2001	6/2002	4 Cylinder	"
Saab	9-5	2000	11,224	6/1999	6/2000	4 Cylinder	"
Saab	9-5	2001	14,681	6/2000	6/2001	4 Cylinder	"
Saab	9-5	2002	12,702	6/2001	6/2002	4 Cylinder	"
Saab	9-5	2001	<u>8,117</u>	6/2000	6/2001	6 Cylinder	"

Estimated GM Total: 103,202

* All vehicles will be inspected for QP3 level components and corrected as required. GM estimates approximately 32,000 of the vehicles reported above have already received the QP3 level components.