



U.S. Department of Transportation
**National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration**



1200 New Jersey Avenue SE.
Washington, DC 20590

April 1, 2019

APR - 1 2019

Mr. Jason Levine
Executive Director
The Center for Auto Safety
1825 Connecticut Ave., NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20009-5708

Dear Mr. Levine:

This letter concerns your June 11, 2018 petition, as well as the July 24, 2018 letter addendum to the petition (collectively "Petition"), which were both sent to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration ("NHTSA" or "the Agency"). Together, these letters requested that NHTSA open a defect investigation into non-collision fire incidents in the following vehicles: 2011-2014 Kia Optima, 2011-2014 Kia Sorento, 2011-2014 Hyundai Sonata, 2011-2014 Hyundai Santa Fe, and 2010-2015 Kia Soul.

Pursuant to the Agency's applicable authority and regulations, including 49 U.S.C. § 30162 and Title 49 CFR Part 552, "Petitions for Rulemaking, Defects, and Noncompliance Orders," NHTSA has conducted a review of the Petition and other pertinent information. As part of this review, NHTSA sent Information Requests to eight manufacturers. The Office of Defect Investigation ("ODI") reviewed the data provided in the responses to the Information Requests, as well as data and information from other sources, including VOQs and Early Warning Data. Based on its review of the applicable material, ODI has decided to grant the petition and open two Preliminary Evaluations (PE 19-003 and PE 19-004) to investigate potential safety-related defects pertaining to the non-collision fires. Copies of the Opening Resumes for PE 19-003 and PE 19-004 are attached for reference and further information.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Ridella, Ph.D.
Director
Office of Defects Investigation

Attachments



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ODI RESUME

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Investigation: DP 18-003
Prompted by: CAS Petition
Date Opened: 08/21/2018
Investigator: Michael Lee
Approver: Stephen Ridella
Subject: Non-crash Fires
Reviewer: Paul Simmons

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: Kia Motors America, Hyundai Motor America
Products: 2011-2014 Kia Optima/Sorento and Hyundai Sonata/Santa Fe
Population: 2,200,000 (Estimated)
Problem Description: Allegations of non-crash vehicle fires.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	120	TBD	TBD
Crashes/Fires:	120	TBD	TBD
Injury Incidents:	0	TBD	TBD
Number of Injuries:	0	TBD	TBD
Fatality Incidents:	0	TBD	TBD
Number of Fatalities:	0	TBD	TBD
Other*:	229	TBD	TBD

*Description of Other: Complaints of melted wires, smoke and/or burning odors, indicating potential fires.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: Open a Defect Petition.

Summary:

On June 11, 2018, the Center for Auto Safety (CAS) petitioned NHTSA to conduct a defect investigation into non-crash fires on model year 2011-2014 Kia Optima and Sorento, and Hyundai Sonata and Santa Fe vehicles. The CAS petition cited at least 120 Vehicle Owner Questionnaire (VOQ) reports of fires and additional 229 VOQs of melted wires, smoke and/or burning odors, indicating potential fires on these vehicles, as of June 7, 2018.

ODI's preliminary review of the VOQs indicates the majority of the reported fires appears to be related to the engine failures covered by two current Recall Queries: RQ17-003 on Kia vehicles and RQ17-004 on Hyundai vehicles. ODI is opening a Defect Petition to review the petition, VOQs, Early Warning Data, and other information on the subject vehicles followed by a decision to grant or deny the petition.

The following VOQ numbers (120 fire reports) are cited by the petitioner and can be viewed at www.nhtsa.gov.

10341928 10386128 10398744 10429442 10436180 10441602 10465924 10476823 10482868 10503081 10534292
10547548 10553823 10555125 10558870 10560485 10572612 10587361 10645013 10650571 10661186 10692124
10693248 10694186 10702294 10705662 10714982 10726832 10748707 10748982 10779962 10783067 10785478
10786603 10787041 10787681 10806151 10806344 10808477 10812040 10821034 10824280 10846035 10850516
10852467 10861488 10873251 10883323 10884112 10892633 10894943 10895904 10901907 10903380 10903804
10905594 10914540 10918948 10920235 10926855 10930342 10938549 10949004 10957216 10958524 10965933
10968692 10970145 10971800 10972006 10978698 10980295 10984187 10985144 10991332 10991353 10991729
11005870 11010849 11012450 11012531 11012907 11013481 11015550 11015830 11016078 11016332 11022683

11022912 11024053 11031971 11043333 11044183 11045499 11047022 11052937 11057393 11058273 11060659
11062637 11065937 11066433 11066583 11071675 11073341 11074148 11075310 11076296 11080980 11081758
11082829 11090028 11090119 11090295 11091115 11093994 11097211 11097793 11097934 11098807



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Investigation: PE 19-003
Date Opened: 03/29/2019
Investigator: Nathan Ong
Approver: Stephen Ridella
Subject: Non-crash Vehicle Fires
Reviewer: Paul Simmons

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: Hyundai Motor America
Products: 2011-2014 Hyundai Sonata and Sante Fe
Population: 1,298,220

Problem Description: Allegations of non-crash vehicle fires.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	160	1,181	1,341
Crashes/Fires:	160	1,181	1,341
Injury Incidents:	3	23	26
Number of Injuries:	3	23	26
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
Other*:	1	0	1

*Description of Other: Reports of non-crash fires that allegedly caused a vehicle crash

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: Defect Petition DP18-003 has been granted. A Preliminary Evaluation has been opened.

Summary:

In a letter dated Jun 11, 2018, the Center for Auto Safety (CAS) petitioned the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to initiate a safety defect investigation into non-collision related fires on model year (MY) 2011-2014 Kia Optima and Sorento, and Hyundai Sonata and Santa Fe vehicles. In a letter dated July 24, 2018, CAS requested that MY 2010-2015 Kia Soul vehicles be added to the petition. CAS stated that there is a higher number of complaints to NHTSA regarding non-crash fires on these vehicles compared to other similar vehicles. The Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) had already opened a Recall Query (RQ17-004) on all Hyundai vehicles equipped with Theta II engines for engine failures that may cause stalling and fires. The query covers most of the petition subject Sonata and Santa Fe vehicles.

On August 21, 2018, ODI opened a Defect Petition (DP18-003) to evaluate whether to grant or deny the CAS petition. ODI sent an Information Request letter to Hyundai (September 2018) requesting information on all engine and non-engine related fires in the petition Hyundai vehicles. ODI performed extensive analysis on the information obtained from Hyundai. During the DP18-003 analysis, Hyundai initiated three additional safety recalls related to engine compartment fires on certain petitioned and non-petitioned vehicles, (nearly 240,000 total vehicles: Recalls 18V-934, 19V-063, and 19V-204). In addition to engine compartment fires, ODI has received allegations of vehicle fires affecting other components, including taillight housings, taillight wire harnesses, and/or light bulbs. Based on ODI's review of the applicable materials, including responses to Information Requests sent to multiple manufacturers, Vehicle Owner Questionnaires (VOQ), and Early Warning Data, NHTSA has decided to grant the petition.

The petition is hereby granted. A Preliminary Evaluation has been opened to assess the scope, frequency, and potential safety-related consequences of alleged defects relating to non-collision vehicle fires in the 2011-2014 Sonata

and 2011-2014 Santa Fe. While prior recalls of vehicles covered by this PE have primarily related to engine fires, NHTSA's Preliminary Evaluation is not limited to engine components and may cover additional vehicle systems or components as well.

Attached is a list of the reference numbers for the 160 VOQs cited above.

11190333, 10436180, 10476823, 10748982, 10861488, 10905594, 10949004, 10981324, 10984546, 10993939, 11170112, 11014194, 11021322, 11044183, 11065937, 11161289, 11080980, 11155446, 11104590, 11105401, 11111915, 11113354, 11150942, 11150343, 11139181, 11140657, 11140752, 11142268, 11141534, 10346874, 10386128, 10424306, 10453009, 11187260, 10465924, 10482868, 10503081, 10534292, 10546705, 10547548, 10553823, 10555125, 10558870, 11184400, 11184011, 10560485, 10610098, 11183838, 10640908, 11183412, 10650571, 10693248, 10777612, 10779962, 10780668, 10785478, 10787131, 11181677, 10787681, 10806151, 10807125, 10809023, 10818639, 11176681, 10821034, 10824796, 10838002, 10838571, 10852467, 10852782, 10883323, 10884112, 10895904, 10903380, 10920235, 10926855, 10930342, 10957216, 11171819, 10957996, 10959452, 10968643, 10968692, 10970853, 10971800, 10972006, 10980295, 10990665, 10991246, 10991729, 10993156, 10993381, 11006558, 11010849, 11011280, 11012907, 11016078, 11022683, 11164364, 11023916, 11030381, 11043333, 11045499, 11057393, 11057396, 11058273, 11162844, 11060659, 11161091, 11066433, 11066583, 11160681, 11081124, 11157188, 11081341, 11082829, 11155821, 11090028, 11091115, 11102289, 11155488, 11102708, 11102866, 11103420, 11154432, 11104584, 11110362, 11153979, 11112530, 11115112, 11115234, 11115291, 11115600, 11118528, 11118695, 11152354, 11121653, 11122979, 11122570, 11123583, 11124397, 11124486, 11128195, 11129928, 11130638, 11130821, 11130902, 11131691, 11131686, 11139611, 11140750, 11140546, 11140573, 11144171, 11140567, 11143313, 11142780, 11141082, 11142519, 11141187,



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Investigation: PE 19-004
Date Opened: 03/29/2019
Investigator: Michael Lee
Approver: Stephen Ridella
Subject: Non-crash Vehicle Fires
Reviewer: Paul Simmons

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: Kia Motors America
Products: 2011-2014 Kia Optima and Sorento; and 2010-2015 Kia Soul
Population: 1,686,790

Problem Description: Allegations of non-crash vehicle fires.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	244	1,540	1,784
Crashes/Fires:	244	1,540	1,784
Injury Incidents:	9	50	59
Number of Injuries:	11	66	77
Fatality Incidents:	1	1	1**
Number of Fatalities:	1	1	1**
Other*	1	3	4

***Description of Other:** Reports of non-crash fires that allegedly caused a vehicle crash.

** Total eliminates duplicates received by ODI and manufacturer.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: Defect Petition DP18-003 has been granted. A Preliminary Evaluation has been opened.

Summary:

In a letter dated June 11, 2018, the Center for Auto Safety (CAS) petitioned the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to initiate a safety defect investigation into non-collision related fires on model year (MY) 2011-2014 Kia Optima and Sorento, and Hyundai Sonata and Santa Fe vehicles. In a letter dated July 24, 2018, CAS requested that MY 2010-2015 Kia Soul vehicles be added to the petition. CAS stated that there is a higher number of complaints to NHTSA regarding non-crash fires on these vehicles compared to other similar vehicles. The Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) had already opened a Recall Query (RQ17-003) on all Kia vehicles equipped with Theta II engines for engine failures that may cause stalling and fires. The query covers most of the petition subject Optima and Sorento vehicles but not any of the subject Soul vehicles.

On August 21, 2018, ODI opened a Defect Petition (DP18-003) to evaluate whether to grant or deny the CAS petition. ODI sent Information Request letters to Kia (September and October 2018) requesting information on all engine and non-engine related fires in the petition Kia vehicles. ODI performed extensive analysis on the information obtained from Kia. During the DP18-003 analysis, Kia initiated three additional safety recalls related to engine compartment fires on certain petitioned and non-petitioned vehicles (nearly 500,000 total vehicles: Recalls 18V-907, 19V-101, and 19V-120). Based on ODI's review of the applicable materials, including responses to Information Requests sent to multiple manufacturers, Vehicle Owner Questionnaires (VOQ), and Early Warning Data, NHTSA has decided to grant the petition.

The petition is hereby granted. A Preliminary Evaluation has been opened to assess the scope, frequency, and potential safety-related consequences of alleged defects relating to non-collision vehicle fires in the 2011-2014 Kia Optima, 2011-2014 Kia Sorento, and 2010-2015 Kia Soul. While prior recalls of vehicles covered by this PE have primarily related to engine fires, NHTSA's Preliminary Evaluation is not limited to engine components and may cover additional vehicle systems or components as well.

Attached is a list of the reference numbers for the 244 VOQs cited above.

List of 244 VOQ Numbers

10341928, 10349737, 10351369, 10352853, 10359951, 10362292, 10370821, 10398744, 10412239, 10429442, 10429655, 10437522, 10441602, 10441698, 10447319, 10458979, 10476786, 10554720, 10566975, 10572612, 10587361, 10608591, 10626163, 10639351, 10639417, 10645013, 10661186, 10692124, 10693084, 10694186, 10702294, 10705662, 10714982, 10722839, 10726832, 10731276, 10748707, 10783067, 10786603, 10787041, 10787877, 10789435, 10808477, 10824280, 10836581, 10836751, 10839138, 10846035, 10850516, 10865183, 10873241, 10873251, 10874184, 10892633, 10894943, 10898504, 10901907, 10903731, 10903804, 10915744, 10918948, 10926798, 10927841, 10938549, 10958524, 10965933, 10970145, 10971641, 10978698, 10984187, 10984715, 10984970, 10985144, 10991332, 10991353, 10994523, 11001902, 11004359, 11004929, 11005870, 11010794, 11010999, 11012450, 11012531, 11013481, 11013556, 11015550, 11015777, 11015830, 11016332, 11019133, 11021789, 11022903, 11022912, 11025437, 11031971, 11040562, 11041768, 11047022, 11052937, 11055326, 11066866, 11071675, 11073341, 11074148, 11075310, 11076296, 11080315, 11081758, 11083606, 11089043, 11089968, 11090119, 11090295, 11093994, 11096761, 11097793, 11097934, 11098807, 11101703, 11101961, 11102293, 11102349, 11110065, 11110876, 11110889, 11111005, 11111480, 11111708, 11111767, 11112053, 11112362, 11112455, 11112486, 11112495, 11112496, 11112989, 11113500, 11114289, 11114517, 11115586, 11115650, 11115903, 11119545, 11119577, 11119685, 11119735, 11120580, 11120842, 11121206, 11121693, 11121719, 11121844, 11122204, 11123614, 11124571, 11127964, 11128568, 11128790, 11128814, 11128846, 11128852, 11129070, 11129587, 11131126, 11132280, 11132316, 11132429, 11132956, 11132973, 11133028, 11133307, 11133319, 11133458, 11139133, 11139148, 11139335, 11139506, 11140287, 11140337, 11140471, 11140474, 11141168, 11141323, 11141807, 11142172, 11142200, 11142272, 11142750, 11144208, 11144563, 11150291, 11151813, 11152031, 11153421, 11153705, 11154095, 11154128, 11154184, 11154347, 11154526, 11154607, 11154618, 11156388, 11156505, 11160651, 11160749, 11160978, 11161031, 11162215, 11163325, 11163941, 11164332, 11164861, 11166761, 11170550, 11170556, 11170588, 11170597, 11170614, 11170642, 11170778, 11171259, 11171483, 11173061, 11173144, 11173740, 11175775, 11176066, 11176183, 11176454, 11181712, 11183465, 11183921, 11183965, 11184819, 11185770, 11186541, 11187011, 11187068, 11187086, 11189793, 11190052, 11190214.