



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

# ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 09-025  
Date Opened: 05/13/2009 Date Closed: 10/02/2009  
Principal Investigator: Derek Rinehardt  
Subject: Power Steering Fluid Leaks - Fires

Manufacturer: General Motors Corporation  
Products: MY 2006 Impala/Monte Carlo and MY 2005-06 Pontiac Grand Prix  
Population: 500,000

Problem Description: The power steering return hose or clamp may experience pressures that exceed its strength causing a fluid leak. Consumers have alleged these fluid leaks have caused fires in two cases and difficulty in steering in other cases.

## FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	35	586	621
Crashes/Fires:	3	5	7
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
# Injuries:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	45,315	45,315

\*Description Of Other: Warranty Claims

Action: This Preliminary Evaluation has been closed.

Engineer: Derek Rinehardt

Date: 10/02/2009

Div. Chief: Jeffrey L. Quandt

Date: 10/02/2009

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 10/02/2009

Summary: General Motors (GM) initiated a Customer Satisfaction Campaign in October of 2006 to address a failure of the power steering hose and/or clamps that could occur when the engine is started in vehicles primarily operated in the following states that experience extremely cold temperatures: Alaska, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, Wisconsin and Wyoming. At the time this Preliminary Evaluation (PE) was opened, only 1 of the 33 complaints received by the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) was from a state covered by the Customer Satisfaction Campaign.

In response to an Information Request sent by ODI, GM provided information that included 6 alleged fires and 1 alleged minor crash potentially related to the alleged defect. One of the alleged fires is a duplicate of a report received by ODI.

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Of the fire incidents, 2 of the 6 alleged fire incidents occurred after the remedy detailed in the Customer Satisfaction Program was performed. One of the vehicles was totaled as a result of the incident. It is undetermined whether the incidents were related to the alleged defect or were a by product of the repair. Of the other four alleged fire incidents, 1 incident involved smoke only and no visible flames. Based on the information provided, the remaining 3 fire incidents were localized events that primarily involved damage to the power steering components and surrounding wiring. All 3 of these vehicles were subsequently repaired. None of the alleged fire incidents occurred while the vehicle was unattended. ODI is aware of 1 additional alleged fire incident that was not included in GM's Information Request response. Based on the consumer's description of the incident, the fire was quickly extinguished by a friend and the vehicle was subsequently repaired at a Dealership. In total ODI is aware of 6 alleged fire incidents where the consumer alleged flames were visible. All of the alleged fire incidents occurred while the vehicle was still attended.

ODI is aware 1 minor crash alleged to be related to a power steering fluid leak. The consumer alleged a minor crash occurred as the consumer was attempting to pull into a driveway and had difficulty negotiating the turn due to experiencing high power steering efforts and struck a snow bank.

In a letter dated September 21, 2009, GM informed ODI that a Customer Satisfaction Program will commence in December of 2009 for the entire United States. As a remedy the power steering hose assembly for vehicles with V8 engines and the power steering return hose and clamps for vehicles with V6 engines will be replaced with upgraded components.

Based on the low frequencies and minor severities of the alleged fire incidents and crash, no safety related defect trend has been identified in the subject vehicles. GM's expanded Customer Satisfaction Program will provide free repairs to vehicles excluded from the original campaign. Accordingly, this investigation has been closed. The closing of this investigation does not constitute a finding by NHTSA that a safety-related defect does not exist. The agency will continue to monitor complaints and other information relating to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles and take further action in the future if warranted.