



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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE09-055
Date Opened: 12/07/2009
Principal Investigator: Bruce York
Subject: HVAC Switch Failures

Manufacturer: Ford Motor Company
Products: 1997 – 2008 E350/450 Ford Cab/Chassis
Population: 592,653 (estimated)

Problem Description: The blower switch on certain Ford E350/450 vehicles may overheat/melt and catch fire.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	1	0	1
Crashes/Fires:	1	0	1
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
# Injuries:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	44	0	44

*Description of Other: Switch failures experienced by two fleets where the blower motor switch melted or burned.

Action: This Preliminary Evaluation has been opened.

Engineer: Bruce York

Date: 12/07/2009

Div. Chief: Richard Boyd

Date: 12/07/2009

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 12/07/2009

Summary: ODI has received 1 complaint and 2 fleet reports from transportation fleets alleging over 44 switch failures. Each fleet operates mini buses built on a Ford E350 or E450 cutaway chassis. The OEM HVAC blower switches have melted and become inoperable on vehicles in each fleet. Some drivers have reported a burning smell or smoke coming from the dash.

One fleet reported a vehicle fire. No injuries were sustained. However, the bus was carrying special needs children when the driver noticed smoke coming from the dash. The driver was able to evacuate the children prior to the vehicle becoming engulfed in flames.

One fleet reported that a new switch pigtail was available and had apparently solved the issue.

A Preliminary Evaluation (PE) is warranted to determine if the blower motor switch failures create a situation where a vehicle fire is possible and presents a safety risk to the driver and other passengers.