



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

# ODI RESUME

INVESTIGATION: PE 02-029  
DATE OPENED: Mar 07, 2002      DATE CLOSED: AUG 22 2002  
SUBJECT: Passenger Compartment Fires  
PROMPTED BY: IE02-029  
PRINCIPAL ENGINEER: Peter C. Ong

MANUFACTURER: Volvo Cars of North America, LLC  
MODEL(S): 850 series  
MODEL YEAR(S): 1996 - 1997  
VEHICLE POPULATION: 101,836 850 series vehicles (64,938 vehicles equipped with heated seats)

PROBLEM DESCRIPTION: Passenger compartment fire or smoke originating from the front seats while the vehicle is being operated.

## FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	MANUFACTURER	TOTAL
COMPLAINTS:	5	50	50*
CRASHES:	0	0	0
CRASHES:	0	0	0
# INJURIES:	0	3	3
FATAL CRASHES	0	0	0
# FATALITIES	0	0	0
OTHERS			
WARRANTIES	N/A	3489	3489

\*Excludes ODI/Mfr duplicates

ACTION: This Preliminary Evaluation (PE) has been upgraded to an Engineering Analysis (EA).

ENGINEER: *[Signature]*

DIV CHF: *[Signature]*

OFC DIR: *[Signature]*

DATE: 8/2/02

DATE: 8/22/02

DATE: 8-22-02

SUMMARY: From Volvo's response, they have identified 50 reports of seat fires or risk of seat fires on the Volvo 850 series vehicles (sedans and station wagons). They consist of 30 owner complaints, three field reports and 17 legal claims. There are three allegations of minor injuries to the occupant. In addition, Volvo has 3489 warranty claims for potential fire-related seat problems with the power seat motor, heater element, thermostat, and grounding of the seat wiring harness assemblies. Volvo believes that the seat heater cable harness assembly may likely be the source of the fires and are further investigating this issue.

Based on the information provided by Volvo concerning the number of fires and potential fire incidences on MY1996 - 1997 850 series vehicles, this PE is upgraded to an Engineering Analysis (EA).

*elzalc*  
*[Handwritten initials]*