

Vehicle fires, continued



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Over the last decade, we have experienced hundreds of vehicle fires. In September of 2019, NALC requested a breakout of the number of recent vehicle fires involving city letter carriers.

USPS's response, released in October 2019, indicates that we have experienced 377 LLV Fires, 36 FFV fires and surprisingly, five ProMaster fires within the last five years. The ProMaster fires were all within the last two years.

Fire investigation—all city delivery vehicles

Separate from the above, in November 2019, NALC requested reports prepared by an outside contractor concerning the investigation of fires involving vehicles used in

the city delivery craft.

In September 2019, LLV 3314535 was involved in a fire. The report determined that the point of origin for the fire was the dashboard area. Sadly, this vehicle was a loaner from the vehicle maintenance facility and should have been in tip-top shape if it was being serviced properly.

In the same month, LLV 0205495 also was involved in a fire. The report determined that the causation scenario included the ignition of escaping fuel and/or vapors out of the throttle body injection unit by an ignition source. In that investigation, the carrier reported having "...shut the truck off. Heard a pop noise come from the engine...didn't think anything of it...delivered a parcel...tried to start it three times...smoke started to come from the dashboard... saw flames coming from the engine..."

LLV problems continue

The number of city delivery vehicle fires listed above includes 77 LLV fires in Fiscal Year 2019. Despite all efforts by NALC to encourage every letter carrier to inspect his or her assigned vehicle every single day, we know that it is not happening. The National Agreement, through the *M-41*, provides time for each and every one of you to conduct a vehicle inspection every morning. The purpose is for you to pay close attention to the condition of your vehicle, checking for any leaks and reporting any conditions that you believe to be a hazard. Your opinion counts and what you report must be addressed. If it is not, please see your shop steward.

ProMaster recall

In August 2019, ProMaster 6420538 was involved in a fire. The fire investigation report suggested the probability

that "adverse electrical activity involving the cooling fan or one of the conductors, relays, or resistors that connected to the cooling fan module" was involved. The conclusion determined that the "cooling fan cannot be eliminated" as contributory to the fire.

The report added that there were at least eight complaints on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) website about the vehicle, there was no recall listed at the time.

In early December, Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000 President Walter Barton brought a possible ProMaster recall to my attention, through his inquiry to the USPS in his area.

"We seek to know which of our ProMasters are affected by the recall, and what USPS plans to do about the hazard..."

While researching the NHTSA website, we discovered the following information relating to ProMasters:

November 15, 2019 NHTSA CAMPAIGN NUMBER: 19V818000

Engine Cooling Fan May Seize and Cause Fire

An overheated fan motor increases the risk of a fire.

NHTSA Campaign Number: 19V818000

Manufacturer Chrysler (FCA US LLC)

Components ENGINE AND ENGINE COOLING, EQUIPMENT

Potential Number of Units Affected: 99,128

Summary

Chrysler (FCA US LLC) is recalling certain 2015-2018 Ram ProMaster vehicles equipped with 3.0L diesel or 3.6L gasoline engines and air conditioning (A/C). The engine cooling fan may seize which can cause the cooling fan motor to overheat.

Remedy

The remedy for this recall is still under development. Interim notices informing owners of the safety risk are scheduled to begin mailing on or before January 4, 2020. Owners will receive a second notice when the remedy becomes available. Owners may contact Chrysler customer service at 1-800-853-1403. Chrysler's number for this recall is VB2.

NALC has made an inquiry to USPS Headquarters. We seek to know which of our ProMasters are affected by the recall, and what USPS plans to do about the hazard until the manufacturer establishes the remedy as referenced above.

Upon receipt of relevant information, it will be forwarded to your national business agents (NBA) for distribution to the branches.