



Automotive Fire Analysis: An Engineering Approach

Gregory J. Barnett

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The data on motor vehicle fires are misleading and most certainly underreported. The number of collision and non-collision motor vehicle fire deaths quoted in national statistics varies widely – anywhere from 300 to over 1,000 annually, depending on the data source. But more than 385,000 vehicle fires have been reported in the US each year and these numbers reported by national data sources are most certainly low and not representative of the true picture.

Data involving post crash vehicle fires has historically been involved in litigation and therefore is difficult to obtain. As auto makers increasingly build more fuel efficient, lighter cars – replacing metal parts with more easily ignited plastic – the nature, incidence and severity of collision and non-crash auto fires is likely to worsen. Major manufacturers have historically been reluctant to release information for fear of ongoing litigation.

In *Automotive Fire Analysis: An Engineering Approach*, experienced field engineer Gregory Barnett points out the common problems with the way automotive fires are investigated. Mr. Barnett has compiled the research undertaken to date by manufacturers, standards organizations and private institutions into one compact guide. You will be guided through the proper techniques of fire analysis, including what to look for when investigating arson, how to tell the difference between flame-resistant plastics and the plastics that look identical but are flammable, what types of flammable liquids are in cars, how they burn, and much more.

Additional topics include • Codes and standards for automotive safety • Identifying flame retardant compounds • Fire behavior • Signs of arson • Determining burn temperature • Finding burn patterns • Exhaust system fires • Underhood fires • Electric system fires • Flammable liquids • Manufacturer liability

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