Spring 2007 brings us a new baseball season and a new massive recall from Ford Motor Company. On April 11, 2007, Ford announced Recall No. 07S51 recalling approximately 500,000 Ford Escapes manufactured between 2001 and 2004. The recall also included approximately 75,000 vehicles located in Canada and Mexico. Ford initiated the recall after receiving numerous complaints that the Escapes’ anti-lock brake module was over-heating, smoking and sometimes catching fire. Similar to the very familiar speed control deactivation switch fires, the Escapes’ anti-lock brake module is always energized and it can catch fire even if the car is turned off and the keys are out of the ignition.

Initial reports indicate that the fires occur in anti-lock brake modules that have missing or misaligned seals around the module’s electrical connection. Without a properly fitting seal, moisture, salt and particles can enter the module and corrode the wiring at the connection. The corroded wiring can eventually over-heat and ignite a fire. Because the module is located underneath the master cylinder and brake fluid reservoir, a fire at the module can quickly spread and cause significant damage to the vehicle and surrounding area. Ford reported that only Escapes manufactured at its Kansas City Assembly Plant or Ohio Assembly Plant were produced with missing or misaligned seals. Nevertheless, all fires involving a Ford Escape (or its twin sister: the Mazda Tribute) should be closely examined. Unfortunately, the vehicle’s VIN will not reveal whether the vehicle is a part of the recall. Thus, a rapid and effective fire scene inspection is crucial to determining whether the anti-lock brake module caused the fire.

Cozen O’Connor has a number of attorneys with extensive experience in evaluating and handling subrogation files related to vehicle fires. Indeed, Cozen O’Connor has established a Ford Vehicle Fire Task Force dedicated to investigating and pursuing Ford for fires caused by defects in their vehicles. Cozen O’Connor has the right attorney to help you for your losses occasioned by a vehicle fire. For additional information and/or assignments, please contact any of the following attorneys:

**JOHN W. REIS, ESQ.**
Cozen O’Connor
301 South College Street, Suite 2100
One Wachovia Center
Charlotte, NC 28202
phone: 704.348.3416
dan: 704.334.3351
email: jreis@cozen.com

**WILLIAM MAHONEY, ESQ.**
Cozen O’Connor
2300 Bank One Center
1717 Main Street
Dallas, TX 75201
phone: 214.462.3020
dan: 214.462.3299
email: wmahoney@cozen.com