

“KEEPING PACE” - #66

FATAL FUEL LINE FIRE:



This is the remains of a pickup truck which was being driven at 55 mph when a fire was observed under its bed. Four children were riding in the bed, under a camper top. The fire accelerated so quickly that none of these four children could be rescued.

I opined that the fire originated from a leak in the nonmetallic fuel line under the bed, possibly in turn caused by heat from the muffler. The manufacturer's experts wrote a report in which they agreed. Terms of the settlement which was reached were confidential, but suffice to say that the settlement made the Cincinnati newspaper even though this loss occurred near Ft. Wayne, Indiana, 170 miles away.

After the settlement, two of the plaintiff attorneys told me that the vehicle manufacturer spent \$300,000 having their experts try to simulate a leaking nonmetallic fuel line breaking down to cause a fire, without success, before they settled this case. In my experience, simulation sometimes does not imitate reality.

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