

Ford Loses Verdicts in Two Cases Involving Fuel tank Explosions

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Juries in two separate cases awarded verdicts against Ford Motor Co. for faultily designed fuel tanks in Mustangs that exploded in rear end collisions and burned the car occupants.

In Boston, a federal jury awarded \$1 million to James D. Elias, who was burned over 45% of his body when his 1972 Mustang burned following a 1977 rear-end collision.

In Portland, Ore. a State jury returned a \$2.5 million verdict against Ford in a case involving a 1976 Mustang that burst into flame after being hit from behind in 1978. Virginia Lea Fuhrmann, who was in the Mustang died from burns.

A spokesman said Ford is "evaluating the verdicts and hasn't yet decided whether or not to appeal." He added that similar suits concerning Mustangs are pending, but he wouldn't say how many.