

MONROE COUNTY DELIVERS UNANIMOUS VERDICT IN FAVOR OF MAZDA

Irvine, CA (May 10, 2025) – On March 28, a Monroe County jury returned a unanimous verdict in favor of Mazda North American Operations (MNAO), finding the automobile manufacturer not liable for a 2020 fire that destroyed the garage and home of Ardice and John Sweeney in Kunkletown, Pennsylvania.

The deadline for the plaintiff to appeal the verdict has now ended making this verdict final.

Erie Insurance Exchange, which paid to rebuild the Sweeneys' property following the fire, as subrogee of the Sweeneys, subsequently filed a product liability action against Mazda, seeking approximately \$700,000 in damages. Erie claimed that a defect in the Sweeneys' new 2019 Mazda CX-5 was the origin of the blaze.

According to Erie, while parked in the home's garage, a defect in the CX-5 vehicle's engine compartment battery wiring was the probable cause of their fire. Erie's experts testified that all other potential causes had been ruled out.

Mazda asserted that: (1) the physical evidence and fire patterns conclusively ruled out the CX-5 as the point of origin; (2) several other plausible ignition sources—including the garage's electrical circuitry, a refrigerator, and improperly discarded smoking materials—had not been sufficiently considered by Erie's investigators; and (3) there were no defects in the CX-5's wiring that could have caused the fire.

After a five-day trial the jury, which deliberated for approximately two hours, found in favor of Mazda.

Erie Insurance Exchange was represented by Anthony W. Ziccardi and Robert Smolen of Gaul & Associates, P.C.

Mazda was represented by Michael J. Wozny and Gerard Cedrone of Lavin, Cedrone, Boyd, Graver & DiSipio.

The matter is captioned Erie Insurance Exchange a/s/o Ardice and John Sweeney v. Mazda North American Operations et al., Case No. 5316-CV-2020, in the Court of Common Pleas of Monroe County, Pennsylvania.

About Mazda North American Operations

Proudly founded in Hiroshima, Japan, Mazda has a history of sophisticated craftsmanship and innovation, and a purpose to enrich life-in-motion for those it serves. By putting humans at the center of everything it does, Mazda aspires to create uplifting experiences with our vehicles and for people. Mazda North American Operations is headquartered in Irvine, California, and oversees the sales, marketing, parts and customer service support of Mazda vehicles in the United States, Canada, Mexico and Colombia through approximately 795 dealers. Operations in Canada are managed by Mazda Canada Inc. in Richmond Hill, Ontario; operations in Mexico are managed by Mazda Motor de Mexico in Mexico City; and operations in Colombia are managed by Mazda de Colombia in Bogota, Colombia. For more information on Mazda vehicles, including photography and B-roll, please visit the online Mazda media center at news.mazdausa.com.

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