



U.S. Department
of Transportation
National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

DOT Auto Safety Hotline
Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire
To Report Vehicle Safety Defects
1-888-DASH-2-DOT
(1-888-327-4236)
INTERNET: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 1368

Date Received
MAR 17 AM 11:03
10-FEB-2004

Repository ☐
Reference No.
10067830

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name **[REDACTED]**
Address **[REDACTED]**
City **DOWLESTOWN** State **PA** Zip Code **[REDACTED]**

Daytime Telephone Number **[REDACTED]** E-mail Address **[REDACTED]**
Evening Telephone Number **Same as above**

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of this report to the manufacturer of your vehicle? **YES** ~~NO~~
In the absence of an authorization, NHTSA WILL NOT provide your name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.
Signature of Owner **[REDACTED]** Date **3/12/04**

VEHICLE INFORMATION

17 digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side: **1FMDU73W32U [REDACTED]**
Make **FORD** Model **EXPLORER** Model Year **2002**
Date Purchased **7/2002** Dealer's Name and Telephone Number **Bergway's Ford Inc. 215-793-2740** Engine: **8** Fuel Type: **gas**
Original Owner ☒ Dealer's City **Ambler** State **PA** Zip Code **19002**
Transmission Type **automatic** ☒ Antilock Brakes ☒ Cruise Control **4 wheel drive**
Vehicle Component Code **162610 STRUCTURE:BODY:HATCHBACK/LIFTGATE:HINGE AND ATTACHMENT**
Multiple Failure: **1**

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s) **28 JAN 2004** Failure Mileage **20000** Failure Speed **0**
85 **15000**

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Make **[REDACTED]** Tire Model (Name or Number) **[REDACTED]** Tire Size (Example P215/65R15) **[REDACTED]**
DOT No. (Example: DOTM1ABBC036) **[REDACTED]** Original Equipment Prior Repair ☐ Failure Location: **[REDACTED]**
Tire Component Code **[REDACTED]** Tire Failure Type **[REDACTED]**

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A CHILD SEAT FAILURE

Make: **[REDACTED]** Date Manufactured: **[REDACTED]** Model No./Name: **[REDACTED]**
Seat Type: **[REDACTED]** Installation System: **[REDACTED]**
Child Seat Component Code: **[REDACTED]** Failed Part: **[REDACTED]**

APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION

(Please describe in detail the incident(s), failure(s), crash(es), and injury(ies).)

Crash ☐ Yes ☒ No Fire ☐ Yes ☒ No
Number of Persons Injured **0** Number of Deaths **0** Reported to Police **N**

Narrative Description of Incident(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies).
Please describe (1) events leading up to the failure, (2) failure and its consequences, and (3) what was done to correct the failure:
i.e. parts repaired or replaced (and if old part is available).

WASSE BRASSING LEFT REAR HATCHBACK HINGE/STRUTS SNAPPED. THIS CAUSED THE HATCHBACK WINDOW TO SMATTER AND FALL INTO THE VEHICLE. DEALERSHIP WAS NOTIFIED, BUT DID NOT RESOLVE THE PROBLEM. -AK-

Please see attached.

Include, if available: Police/Fire Department Report, Photos, and Repair Invoice. ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY.

The Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-579) This information is requested pursuant to authority vested in the National Highway Traffic Safety Act and subsequent amendments. You are under no obligation to respond to this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist the NHTSA in determining whether a Manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If the NHTSA proceeds with administrative enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.

Reference No. 10057830

Before describing the incident that occurred, you should first understand how the vehicle operates when not malfunctioning.

The rear of the vehicle has:

- a one-piece liftgate (meaning the entire rear door will open) and
- a Flip Open Rear Window (meaning you can just open the rear window without opening the entire rear door) to gain access to the back of the vehicle.

The Flip Open Rear Window is secured to the vehicle with two (2) hinges located at the top left and top right of the rear window (see picture below). When the Flip Open Rear Window is opened it can remain open on its own indefinitely, without the need to prop it up or hold it up.

left
hinge



right
hinge

On January 25, 2004 the vehicle in question was in park with the engine turned off. I opened only the Flip Open Rear Window to retrieve some packages in the back of the vehicle. The Flip Open Rear Window opened fully and while I was standing outside the rear of the vehicle, I leaned my upper body in to the vehicle. While leaning inside the vehicle; suddenly, without warning, the left Flip Open Rear Window hinge broke and the Flip Open Rear Window fell on to my head.

This vehicle was not involved in any collision or impact prior to this incident. In addition, neither the left nor the right Flip Open Rear Window hinges showed any type of wear prior to this incident.

Although I was not seriously injured (luckily) from this incident, I will often times hold my young son in my left arm while retrieving packages from the back of the vehicle while only the Flip Open Rear Window is open. If I had been holding him at the time of this incident, it is certain that the Flip Open Rear Window would have fallen on HIS head and not mine, causing SERIOUS injury to him.

Ford Explorers are one of the most popular vehicles on the road today and if this incident occurred because of faulty manufacturing or installation of the hinge then I fear there will be countless more injuries of much greater severity.


Reference No. 10057830

The vehicle was taken to Fred Beans Ford Lincoln Mercury of Doylestown, Pennsylvania where the hinge was to be replaced. In the process, the Flip Open Rear Window shattered. Subsequently, the entire Flip Open Rear Window including both the left and right hinges was replaced. A copy of the invoice from Fred Beans detailing the work performed is attached.

I request that this matter be investigated fully by your agency to prevent possible further such incidents.

Sincerely,


Attachments: 2

**THE ATTACHMENTS TO THIS
DOCUMENT HAVE BEEN REMOVED
TO PROTECT UNWARRANTED
INVASION OF PERSONAL PRIVACY
PURSUANT TO EXEMPTION 6 OF
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(6).**