



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

400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

MAR 02 2005

NVS-216 mec
Ref. # 10091907

[REDACTED]
West Chicago, IL [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]:

Thank you for your correspondence dated August 12, 2004, concerning a problem you encountered with your 1999 Ford Taurus vehicle. Your correspondence was received on September 8, 2004. Due to limited resources we were not able to respond to you in a more timely manner. We regret any inconvenience our delay may have caused you.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is the Federal agency responsible for improving safety on our Nation's highways. We are authorized to order manufacturers to recall and repair vehicles or items of motor vehicle equipment when our investigations indicate that they contain serious safety defects in their design, construction, or performance. We also monitor the adequacy of manufacturers' recall campaigns. In order for the agency to initiate an investigation, we look carefully at the body of consumer complaints and other available data to determine whether a defect may exist. We cannot act on isolated problems or resolve disputes between individual owners, dealers, or manufacturers.

We appreciate this report and the previous report you provided. Reports from motorists are a very important source of information for us. Each report is analyzed and entered into a database to determine whether an investigation into a possible safety defect is warranted.

On May 24, 2004, NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) opened a safety defect investigation (PE04-044) into reports alleging failure of the front coil springs installed in 1999 and 2000 Ford Taurus and Mercury Sable vehicles. Then, by letter dated July 6, 2004, Ford Motor Company (Ford) notified NHTSA that it will conduct a safety recall (NHTSA Campaign No. 04V-332) to install a protective shield around the front coil springs in certain 1999 through 2001 Ford Taurus and Mercury Sable vehicles. Subsequent to receiving Ford's letter, ODI closed PE04-044 on August 16, 2004. For your information, we have enclosed a copy of the summary for 04V-332 and the closing resume for PE04-044.

NHTSA is aware that Ford does not have a sufficient supply of protective shields for the front coil springs available to perform the safety-related corrective action for the recall on



DOT AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE
888-DASH-2-DOT
888-327-4236

all vehicles subject to 04V-332 at this time. The owner notification letter you received from Ford clearly states that protective shields will be made available during December 2004. ODI is continuing to monitor reports of problems associated with the suspension system in 1999 through 2001 Ford Taurus and Mercury Sable vehicles and will take future action as appropriate.

You can contact our toll-free DOT Auto Safety Hotline (Hotline) at 1-888-DASH-2-DOT (1-888-327-4236). One of our representatives may be able to assist you on matters concerning motor vehicle and motor vehicle equipment safety recalls or to report an alleged safety problem. You can also request safety information. If our telephones are busy, or you call during non-working hours, you can leave your name, telephone number, and a brief subject on our recording system. A DOT Hotline representative will return your call.

Additionally, we have an Internet Web site at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov> that you may want to visit. An electronic Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ) is also available on this Web site at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/ivoq>. This form is for vehicle owners to report safety related problems about their motor vehicles or motor vehicle equipment, e.g., child safety seats, jacks, tires, brake fluid, etc. The reports submitted are transferred to our database and are used to identify safety-related defect trends that require our attention. If you do not have access to the Internet, please use the enclosed VOQ to inform this agency of any future motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment safety problems you may experience. Also, a summary listing of vehicle owners' complaints, safety recalls, manufacturers' service bulletins, etc., can be obtained at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems>.

If further assistance is needed, please contact Mr. Michael J. Jordan, Safety Defects Program Assistant, Correspondence Research Division, Office of Defects Investigation, at (202) 493-0576.

Sincerely,



Alberto A. Jimenez, Chief
Correspondence Research Division
Office of Defects Investigation
Enforcement

Enclosure