



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

AGENCY USE ONLY 1220

Date Received: 28-DEC-2004

Repository

Reference No.
10105420

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name _____
Address _____
City NEOSHO State MO Zip Code _____

Daytime Telephone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

Evening Telephone Number _____

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of this report to the manufacturer of your vehicle? YES NO
In the absence of an authorized NHTSA will not receive your name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.

Signature of Owner _____ Date 2/3/05

VEHICLE INFORMATION

17 digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side <u>1FT-BQ26G0VE</u>		Make <u>FORD</u>	Model <u>F250 Heavy Duty</u>	Model Year <u>1997</u>
Date Purchased <u>8-17-02</u>	Dealer's Name and Telephone Number <u>Bob Owen Auto Sales 417-791-6750</u>		Engine: <u>460</u> No. of Cylinders: <u>8</u>	Fuel Type: <u>Unleaded</u>
Original Owner <input type="checkbox"/>	Dealer's City <u>JOPLIN</u>	State <u>MO</u>	Zip Code <u>64801</u>	
Transmission Type <u>AUTO D/D</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Antilock Brakes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cruise Control	Powertrain	Vehicle Component Code <u>221200 SEATS:FRONT ASSEMBLY:RECLINER</u>	
			Multiple Failure: <u>1</u>	

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s) 14-DEC-2004, LATE NOV 04
Failure Mileage 91800
Failure Speed 70 mph

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Make	Tire Model (Name or Number)	Tire Size (Example P215/65R15)
DOT No. (Example: DOTM15ABC036)	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Prior Repair	Failure Location:
Tire Component Code	Tire Failure Type	

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A CHILD SEAT FAILURE

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

APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION

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

Crash <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Fire <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Number of Persons Injured <u>0</u>	Number of Deaths <u>0</u>	Reported to Police <u>N</u>
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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(s), parts repaired or replaced (and if old part is available).

WHILE DRIVING, THE SEAT RECLINED WHICH LEFT THE DRIVER LAYING COMPLETELY DOWN. PLEASE PROVIDE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION.
*38
12 Approx 45° Angle
At Fault is seat & base spring assembly
Not Reclining mechanism.

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.

February 07, 2005

Board of Directors
Ford Motor Company
PO Box 685
Dearborn, MI 48126-0685

Re: 1997 F250 Heavy Duty Super Cab VIN#1FTHX26GOVE
Shifter / Head Gasket / Seat Base Assembly Defects

Dear Board of Directors of Ford Motor Company:

I am writing to you today to inform you of rather disturbing problems that I have encountered with my 1997 Ford F250 Super Cab Pickup. Enclosed please find several copies of repair tickets as well as photos of the broken seat base assembly for the drivers side front seat. Please be advised that I have tried to resolve this problem through my local Ford dealers, the Customer Service Center, and the regional representative (whom I never met or talked to); but have been unsuccessful to date.

First, I would like to give a brief history of events leading up to this letter. I am a 33 year old construction cost accountant, in-house C.P.A., and Chief Financial Officer for a local developer. I have driven a number of Ford vehicles, and until my last car purchase, only Ford vehicles. I have driven/owned a 1981 LTD, 1985 Ford F150 XLT Lariat, 1988 Ford Escort, 1987 Tempo, 1994 Tempo, 1994 Escort, 1965 Ford Mustang and my current truck referenced above. I can fairly state that with the exception of the 1987 Tempo and my current truck, I have never had a reliability problem with any of your products and have never hesitated in promoting your products to my friends, family, and at work. It was at my urging, and locating of the vehicle, that my employer replaced one of our company trucks in 2002 with a 2002 Ford Superduty Crew Cab. From January through August 2002, I researched, performed CARFAX, and test drove more than 40 different makes and models of trucks including Chevrolet, Dodge, Toyota, and of course my beloved Ford's. After finally locating what I was looking for, I purchased the truck pre-owned through a local dealership on 08/17/02. The mileage at that time was 55,096; what I would consider to be fairly low mileage for a vehicle given today's technology (see copy of title enclosed). My main deciding factors in this purchase were: 1) The "Built Ford Tough" reputation that I have come to expect; 2) It is an F250 with towing package (I have a pull type RV camper); 3) Supercab (I have a wife and 2 children); 4) Low Mileage; and 5) It was in the price range of what I was looking for (mid-teens). Based on this information, as well as the fact that my 1985 F150 had well over 240,000 miles on it when I traded it, I did not hesitate to purchase this truck.

However, shortly after my purchase of the truck, several items began to turn up and I did not think much of them at first. In March 2003 at 61,452 miles, I had to have all of the hub/axle seals replaced as well as routine maintenance items such as packing the bearings, new brake pads, shoes, and rear brake wheel cylinders. The cost of the work was \$803.01 (see copy of invoice enclosed). In September 2003 with only 67,195 miles on the vehicle, I had to have the tie rod ends replaced (see copy of safety inspection), the cost of which was around \$100.00 (I cannot locate my copy of the repair ticket). In February 2004 at approximately 71,000 miles, I had to have the rear wheel seals replaced yet again at a cost of \$101.26 (however, in the defense of my truck, I believe as they must not have been done correctly the first time in March 2003). In July 2004 at a little over 78,000 miles, I was unable to shift the vehicle into any gears, and had to have the truck worked on yet again. The problem was that the shifter bolts had actually worked loose from the dash mount, thus preventing the shifter arm from pivoting and being able to select gears (a repair that I do not feel should have been necessary). I also had the transmission serviced at that time for a total cost of \$125.89. The last two repairs, detailed below, are the primary vehicle failures that I have a hard time accepting as being "normal" and part of vehicle ownership.

In October 2004 with only 80,965 miles on the vehicle, we were on our way to a family outing with the camper referenced above, when the motor unexpectedly blew both sets of head gaskets while cruising at approximately 60 mph on a flat highway approximately 30 miles from our home. The "Check Engine" light never came on nor was there any prior warning of any problems such as engine misfiring, engine temperature increase, oil pressure drop, fluid leakage (i.e. oil, antifreeze), and etc.

The cost for the repair was \$834.67, not including my forfeited camping fees as well as my time, expense, and aggravation of having the truck and camper towed, getting back home, and being without a vehicle for over two weeks.

The final repair ticket (as of the writing of this letter) was for a seat frame and spring assembly due to a failure on the part of the original assembly while traveling down the highway. With approximately 81,800 miles on the odometer, I was on my way home from work one evening in late-November when the seat base broke, resulting in my suddenly and unexpectedly leaning backward into a semi-reclining position. After looking into the problem while on Christmas vacation, I discovered that the seat frame assembly had broken, not the seat back reclining mechanism (see enclosed photos and exploded parts diagram). As you know and can well imagine, this is a very dangerous failure that could have caused myself (and possibly several others) to have sustained serious injuries or worse had I lost control of the vehicle as a result of this parts' failure during rush hour traffic or during inclement weather. The mileage at the time I replaced the seat base assembly was 82,916. I have never encountered this problem with any other vehicles or in my nearly 40 year old 1965 Mustang, let alone in such a new vehicle. The cost for the part alone was \$184.57 (I performed the repair myself). Per Michael, the service manager at Joplin Ford, and a local upholstery shop, the estimated labor would have been around an additional \$100.00. After consulting with the local service manager, parts manager, and the Customer Service Center, everyone I have talked with agrees that the seat base failure is something that should not have occurred. I have serious concerns as to whether or not the seat base assembly when new would have passed the crash test requirements. I still have the original seat base assembly in my possession if you would like to have someone inspect it to substantiate my claim. I have also enclosed several photos of the original seat base assembly (see enclosed photos) that detail that the breakage is in the seat base assembly itself and not in the reclining mechanism.

While I understand that there exists a warranty period and I am certainly willing to accept that some repairs are inevitable and are to be expected as part of vehicle ownership, it is my position that the shifter, head gasket, and seat base repairs should not have been necessary on a truck that only has a little over 80,000 miles on it, is only seven years old, is an F250 Heavy Duty equipped for towing, and is supposedly "Built for the Road Ahead". I further believe that the manufacturer of such a magnificent vehicle such as the Mustang (you scored a Homerun on the new 2005 by the way!) would not produce such a low quality product as my truck seems to have been for the duration of my ownership. In parting, due to being unable to resolve these issues through the local Ford dealership, the regional representative (whom the service manager at Joplin Ford supposedly contacted) and the Customer Service Center, I have filed formal complaints with the Missouri Attorney General's office as well as the US Department of Transportation-National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (see copies of complaints).

I hereby respectfully submit that Ford Motor Company issue me some sort of refund adjustment for what I deem to be totally unnecessary repairs on this vehicle. When calculating the repair costs to date (\$2,249.40), this truck has cost me close to \$75 per month (2,249.40 / 30 months) in repairs alone, not including the monthly mortgage payment and regular maintenance items such as wipers, tires, oil changes (which I perform every 3,000 miles using Motorcraft oil and filters), transmission fluid changes, coolant changes, and etc. Please help to restore some of my faith in your products by setting this right so that I can, in good faith, continue to promote your products and include them in my consideration of future purchases both personally and professionally. Please feel free to contact me via the phone number above after 6:30 p.m. Monday-Friday, anytime on the weekend, via e-mail, or by US mail. I will be more than happy to arrange for you to inspect the vehicle as well as visit with you in order to resolve this matter.

Sincerely

Enclosures (10 + 6 photos)

cc: William Clay Ford Jr.
Chairman of the Board
Chief Executive Officer

Nicholas V. Schock
President

Greg Smith
Exec. VP & Pres.
Ford America

Earl Hesterberg
Group VP
N.A. Service

Ziad Ojaki
Group VP
Corp. Affairs

Susan Clischke
VP Safety
Engineering

Francisco Codina
VP/President
Customer Service

Louise Gooser
VP
Global Quality

Stephen Lyons
VP/Pres.
Ford Division

David Szczepniak
VP Powertrain Ops

Jay Nixon
Missouri Attorney General
PO Box 898
Jefferson City, MO 65102

National Highway Trans. Safety Admin.
Office of Defects Investigation NHTS-216
400 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20590

Missouri Motor Vehicle Inspection
APPROVAL NOTICE

---SEE INFORMATION ON REVERSE SIDE---

TIME INSPECTION STARTED

3:15

TIME INSPECTION ENDED

3:30

CITY Neosho

COUNTY Newton

VEHICLE MAKE Ford MODEL F250 OCCUPANT SEATING 6 LICENSE NUMBER 787BNT1

VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER 1FTHX26G0VE

VEHICLE TYPE: Car Station Wagon Van Truck/Bus Motorcycle

FUEL TYPE: Gas Diesel LPG Electric

DEFECTS

CODE	DEFECTIVE PART	PART COST	LABOR COST	TOTAL
H05	Tire Rod outer right			
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>MISSOURI Department of Revenue Office No. 202</p> <p>SEP 22 2003</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> T <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> R</p> </div>				

ID / O.D. VERIFICATION TRAILER VERIFICATION BRAKE INSPECTED LP RF LR RR

INSPECTION STATION WILSON TIRE STATION NUMBER 000017

CITY WHERE INSPECTED Neosho DATE INSPECTED 9-22-03

INSPECTOR'S PRINT NAME Robert M. Yarnall INSPECTOR'S SIGNATURE [Signature]

REPAIR AUTHORIZATION

I realize total repair cost is an estimate and repairs are not required to be performed at this station, but I authorize the above establishment to repair my vehicle.

OWNER'S SIGNATURE [Signature] DATE REPAIRS MADE 9-22-03

INSPECTOR'S PRINT NAME Robert M. Yarnall STATION / SERIAL NUMBER 0096467

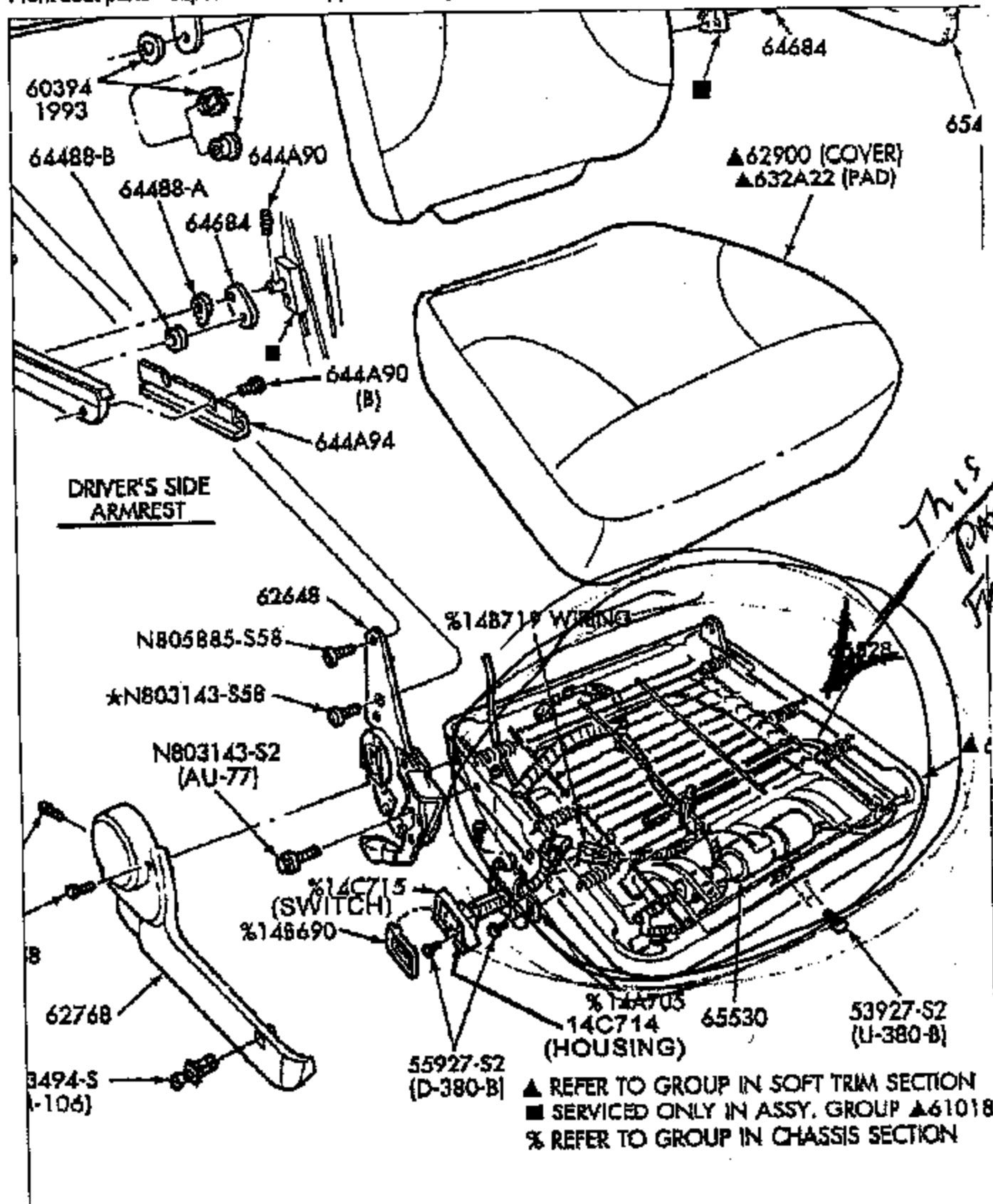
275830

1997 F250

600 - Seats, Seat Belts

SEATS

Front seat parts - captain's chair - upper half - super cab - over 8500# GVW



Consumer Complaint Form



Missouri Attorney General
Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon

Phone: 800-392-8222
Web: www.ago.mo.gov

YOUR NAME MR.
 MRS.
 MS.

ADDRESS STREET NOOSHU CITY MO STATE MO ZIP Newton COUNTY

HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE () _____ E-MAIL _____

MY COMPLAINT IS AGAINST Ford Motor Company

ADDRESS STREET P.O. Box 685 CITY Dearborn STATE MI ZIP 48126 COUNTY Unknown

PHONE () _____ WEB SITE www.ford.com E-MAIL _____

PERSON YOU DEALT WITH JOPLIN FORD
Michael - Service Manager NAME TITLE

PRODUCT OR SERVICE DISPUTED 1997 Ford F250 H.D. Seat base Assm
Transmission Shifter And Hand Basket Failure

DATE OF TRANSACTION/PURCHASE 8 17 02 MONTH DAY YEAR AMOUNT PAID \$14,500⁰⁰
(For example: 05 01 00)

HOW & WHERE DID YOU LEARN ABOUT PRODUCT OR SERVICE? FORD WEBSITE for Features

PAYMENT METHOD CASH CREDIT CARD DEBIT CARD LOAN LEASE CHECK OTHER

DID YOU SIGN A CONTRACT, WARRANTY AGREEMENT OR SIMILAR PAPERS? YES NO

Consumer
Protection
Division
1000
South
Main
Street
Jefferson
City
Missouri
64102

CF-2004-18714

Shelby Olson
Ford
Kool

REVISED JANUARY 2003

12/28/2004

BRIEFLY EXPLAIN YOUR COMPLAINT

POOR QUALITY AND FAULTY VEHICLE; 1) AT ONLY 78,000 miles shifter came loose from DASH 2) AT 81,000 ± head gaskets failed with no warning or other signs. 3) Seat base assembly broke at 81,800 miles while driving on highway. See copy of letter for add'l details.

WHAT ACTION HAVE YOU TAKEN TO RESOLVE THIS COMPLAINT?

TRIED TO RESOLVE WITH

John Ford - service manager. He also supposedly spoke w/ Regional Representative for FORD; also with Customer Care Hotline, and letter referenced above. Awaiting response from Ford Motor Co.

HOW DO YOU WANT THIS COMPLAINT RESOLVED?

- REFUND
- REPAIR
- DELIVER PRODUCT
- PERFORM SERVICE
- REPLACE/TRADE
- OTHER _____

HAVE YOU BEEN SUED OR FILED A LAWSUIT ABOUT THIS COMPLAINT?

- NO
- YES

NAME OF ANY AGENCY CONTACTED

AGENCY ADDRESS

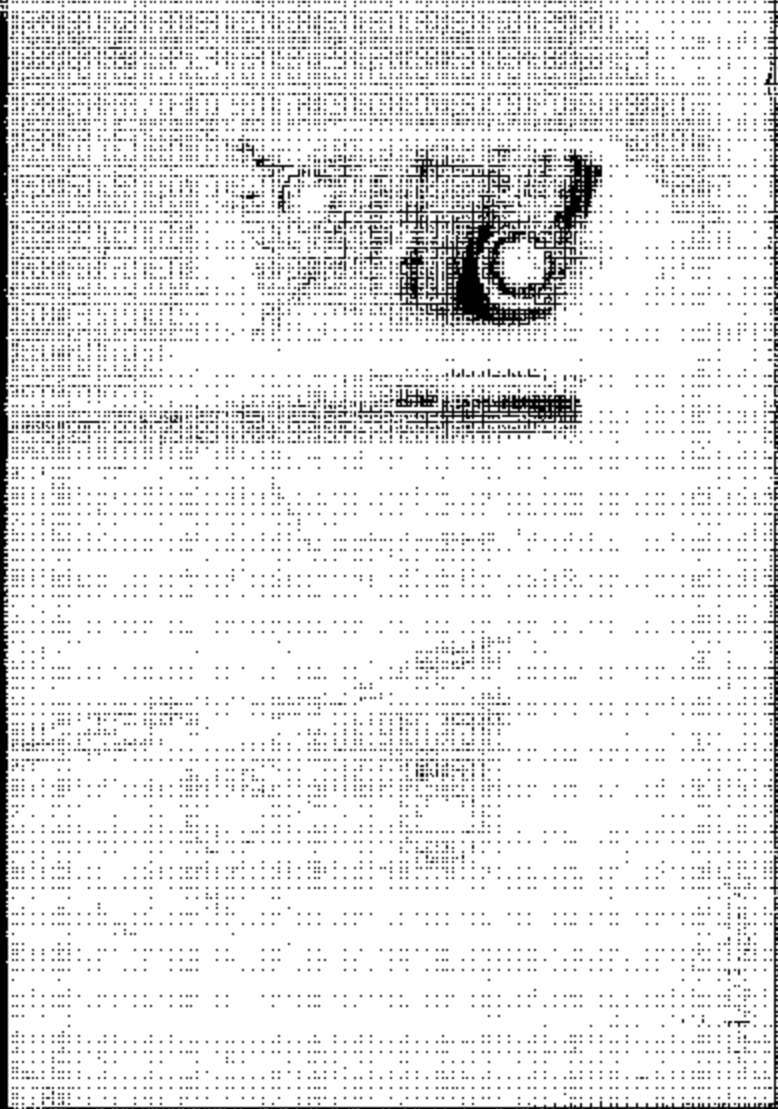


SEAT AS MOUNTED
IN TRUCK PRIOR TO

NOTE - BREAK IS FRONT OF MOUNT
Also see Redding Mechanism



BREAK IS IN SEAT
BASE - NOT IN REDDING
MECHANISM



OLD SEAT BASE -- note *Circle*
New Seat Base By *Mary Kolas*
For Seat Base

Seat Backs in Full Forward Position
Bottom of Camera is Touching
Driver Seat Back - NOTICE DIFF.
IN HOW FAR FORWARD PASS. SEAT GOES

**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).**