10109229

Jimenez, Alberto

From: Jimenez, Alberto
Sent: Friday, January 28, 2005 4:36 PM
To: [redacted]
Subject: Ford F350 Truck fire

We continue to investigate the Ford F-Series vehicles to determine if a safety related defect involving the Speed Control Deactivation Switch (SCDS) exists. Ford has recalled the 2000 MY vehicles for this problem. We have not closed this investigation as a result of the Ford recall. To answer your question, the switch used in the 2001 MY vehicles is a substantially similar switch as used in the 2000 MY vehicles. The environment that the switch exists in may be different. If you are concerned about a potential fire on this vehicle, I would encourage you to disconnect the switch which is located on the master brake cylinder. A new switch can be purchased from a Ford dealer (if one is available) for about $14. This switch can then be installed very easily. If Ford ends up recalling these vehicles, you would be reimbursed for the cost of the switch and the labor to install it. Below is a copy of the most frequently asked questions regarding this investigation and recall. I hope this information answers your questions.

We would like more details concerning the fire that destroyed your F-350, e.g., location of the origin of the fire, whether you have a fire department report, vehicle's VIN, etc. This information can be provided to NHTSA by completing and submitting the Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire that is available on NHTSA web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/ivoq. The information you provide will be entered into our database and will be reviewed. It will be considered with other reports to identify any safety defect trends that may require our attention.

Ford Cruise Control Deactivation Switch Recall

Ford's Recall 05V-017

On January 27, 2005, Ford announced that they would recall approximately 775,000 light trucks to replace the speed control deactivation switch (SCDS). This action is being taken to prevent engine compartment fires. The vehicles subject to this recall include the following vehicles:

a. 2000 MY Ford Expedition;
b. 2000 MY Lincoln Navigator;
c. 2000 MY Ford F150;
d. 2001 MY F150 Super Crew or Crew Cab built from 9/11/99 - 8/7/2000;

Current Investigation - PE04-078

On November 19, 2004, ODI opened Preliminary Evaluation (PE04-078) to investigate allegations of 36 engine compartment fires in MY 2000 Ford F150, Ford Expedition, and Lincoln Navigator vehicles that all reportedly occurred while the vehicle was parked with the ignition "OFF." The location, prior symptoms, or circumstances related to the fires were consistent with Speed Control Deactivation Switch (SCDS) fires observed in previous investigations.

What is a Speed Control Deactivation Switch?

The Speed Control Deactivation Switch is a hydraulic pressure switch that functions as a redundant safety switch to interrupt power to the cruise control servo during brake application, causing the cruise control to disengage. The SCDS is mounted on either the master brake cylinder or on a brake-proportioning valve, both of which are located on the left (driver's) side of the engine compartment.

How/Why does the SCDS fail?
The failure mode of the SCDS is not fully understood at this time. However, NHTSA believes there are two significant stages in the failure mechanism associated with the alleged defect. The first stage involves the development of a leak path from the hydraulic side of the switch to the electrical side of the switch. The second stage involves the corrosion of the switch contacts and the development of a resistive short to ground that generates heat in the switch cavity, which can result in melting of the plastic base and, in some cases, ignition.

For more detailed information related to the alleged failure mechanism of the SCDS, visit the following web address:

<http://152.122.48.12/prepos/files/Artemis/Public/Pursuits/2002/EA/INCR-EA02025-18187P.pdf>

What is the current number of fire related complaints that NHTSA has received?
The ODI has identified 39 fire complaints, which are believed to be related specifically to the SCDS switch on the subject vehicles. The breakdown by model is below. While the ODI is aware of other under hood fire allegations on the subject vehicles, ODI is only releasing data on fires that are confirmed or VERY likely (based on available evidence) to have been caused by the SCDS switch.

2000 MY Ford Expedition: 16
2000 MY Ford F150: 21
2000 MY Lincoln Navigator: 2

What are the differences between the SCDS on the 2000 MY vehicles that are being recalled and the other model/MY vehicles?
The SCDS used on different model/model year vehicles are not considered identical. The switches may have different opening and closing pressures, mounting locations and orientations, base material properties, and be affected by different environmental factors. Further, there may be differences in the wiring harnesses of different model vehicles.

Why hasn't Ford recalled all the vehicles with the switch?
Not all of the Ford model/MY vehicles that contain a SCDS have had complaints of engine compartment fire that can be positively associated with the SCDS. NHTSA will continue to monitor all model/MY Ford vehicles with cruise control for signs of having a safety related defect involving the SCDS.

Is there any action I can take to prevent a fire prior to getting the recall work done?
NHTSA encourages you to check the cruise control on your vehicle and see if it is functioning properly. If at any time your cruise control stops functioning, or you can not get your vehicle out of park, or you have a fuse that "blows" in the circuit containing your SCDS, NHTSA encourages you to take the vehicle to you local Ford dealer and have the problem repaired. If any of the symptoms occur on your vehicle NHTSA also encourages you to disconnect the electrical connector to the SCDS until you can have the vehicle repaired. If you are unable to disconnect the electrical connecter to the SCDS, do **not** to park you vehicle in your garage or near other structures until the vehicle is repaired. You should also report these issues to Ford at 866-436-7332 and to NHTSA at 888-327-4236 or at <http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov>

Is my vehicle safe?
At this time, Ford has determined that a safety related defect exists on the following model year 2000 Ford vehicles:

e. 2000 MY Ford Expedition;

f. 2000 MY Lincoln Navigator;
g. 2000 MY Ford F150;
h. 2001 MY F150 Super Crew or Crew Cab built from 9/11/99 - 8/7/2000;

Also, previously on May 13, 1999 Ford made a defect determination on the following 1992/93 models for a similar problem (Recall 99V-124, See Background Information below):

a. Lincoln Town Car;
b. Mercury Grand Marquis;
c. Ford Crown Victoria

For specific information regarding what vehicles were involved in this recall and more detailed information visit the following web address:
<http://152.122.48.12/prepos/files/Artemis/Public/Recalls/1999/V/RCDNN-99V124-7421.pdf>

Are there warnings or indicators that precede a fire?
There are some vehicle problems commonly reported by complainants who have allegedly had fires resulting from a defective SCDS. These problems include the following:

a. Cruise control stopped working prior to the fire;
b. Cruise control light would come on when I tried to turn it on, but it would not take control of the vehicle speed;
c. Replaced the fuse on the SCDS circuit prior to the fire;
d. Could not get my vehicle out of park before the fire; and
e. Brake lights stopped working prior to the fire.

Where can I have my SCDS inspected or replaced?
You should have you vehicle inspected at your local Ford dealer.

Is there a replacement part?
Replacement parts for the SCDS originally manufactured by Texas Instruments are expected to be available in early April 2005. Ford will notify you by letter to bring your vehicle in for repair. You should contact your local Ford dealer and find out the exact part number to replace the switch in your make/model/model year vehicle. The part number for a Texas Instruments manufactured switch will contain the characters "9F924". You should ensure that the replacement part does not contain these characters.

I have had a fire on my Ford vehicle while it was parked.

What should I do?
You should report the fire to you insurance company, Ford Motor Company at 866-436-7332, and to NHTSA at 888-327-4236. Also you might want to take some photographs of the burned vehicle that can then accompany any complaint or claim.

What will a recall do for me?
Chapter 301 of Title 49 of the United States Code (U.S.C.) requires a manufacturer of motor vehicles or items of motor vehicle equipment that contain a defect relating to motor vehicle safety or fail to comply with a Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard to remedy the defect or noncompliance without charge. If you have previously replaced a SCDS on a vehicle involved in this recall, you may be eligible for

reimbursement. Please contact your local Ford dealer or Ford Motor Company directly. However, the statute does not authorize the NHTSA to require manufacturers to reimburse owners for collateral costs associated with a safety recall (e.g., lost wages while the vehicle is being repaired, car rentals, damage caused by the defect, etc.). Nor does the statute authorize the Federal government to reimburse vehicle owners for any costs associated with safety recalls. If you have not done so, you may consider contacting your insurance company, local Consumer Protection Agency, Better Business Bureau, or your State's Office of the Attorney General for assistance regarding your request. You may also wish to consult with a private attorney of your choice who should be able to advise you on appropriate action

What exactly will Ford's recall do?
Ford will send all owners of the identified vehicles a letter asking that the owner bring the vehicle into a dealer to have the SCDS disconnected. A 2nd letter will follow when a sufficient number of replacement parts are available, instructing the owner to bring his vehicle in for a redesigned SCDS switch.

When will new SCDS switches be available?
Ford will repair the recalled vehicles in two stages. The fist stage will involve brining your recalled vehicle in to have the SCDS deactivated until replacement parts are available. This first stage will begin during the fist week of February, 2005. The second stage will involve replacing the SCDS on recalled vehicles and will start in early April, 2005.

What is NHTSA doing with the investigation?
Both NHTSA and Ford will continue their investigations on this matter. Both organizations are trying to understand differences between the different model years that result in different rates of reported fires.

Background Information:
On May 13, 1999, Ford notified ODI of a safety defect that could result in engine compartment fires in approximately 279,000 model year (MY) 1992 through 1993 Lincoln Town Car, Ford Crown Victoria and Mercury Grand Marquis vehicles (NHTSA Recall No. 99V-124, Ford Recall No. 99S15). According to Ford, the speed control deactivation switches (SCDS) installed in Lincoln Town Car vehicles built from November 4, 1991 through November 30, 1992 and Ford Crown Victoria and Mercury Grand Marquis vehicles built from February 5, 1992 through November 30, 1992 may contain defects that could result in fires. Ford indicated that the defective switches could develop internal leaks that "could result in internal corrosion in the switch which could create a conductive path to ground, ultimately resulting in sufficient internal heat to result in a fire." Because the subject switches receive uninterrupted battery voltage, the fires can occur when the vehicle has been parked with the key in the "OFF" position. Vehicles repaired under the recall received new speed control deactivation switches.

[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Comments:
I would like to submit information reference my 2001 F350 Superduty truck which burned in the driveway of our home in November 2004. There was no apparent cause for the fire and the truck was declared a total loss. I believe this incident relates to the recently announced recall by the Ford Motor Company. Thank you [redacted]
From NHTSA Web Site.

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