



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

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

MAR 11 2005

NVS-216 jcc
Ref. #10109722

Wauwatosa, WI

Dear

Thank you for your correspondence dated January 5, 2005, concerning a problem you encountered with your 2000 Ford F-150 truck. Your correspondence was received on January 18, 2005. 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 the 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.

NHTSA is aware of Ford's Technical Service Bulletins (TSB) (Article Nos. 03-9-9 and 03-15-13) concerning an updated inspection procedure for the tie rod ends installed in certain 1997 through 2003 Ford sport utility vehicles (SUV) and trucks, which include 2000 Ford F-150 trucks. However, the issuance of a TSB does not necessarily reflect the existence of a safety-related defect within the meaning of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act. Further, the maintenance schedule for the steering system in the subject vehicles was not changed. According to Ford, the TSBs were issued only to provide service personnel with more detailed information about the inspection procedure.



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

On April 21, 1998, NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) opened a safety defect investigation (PE98-024) into alleged tie rod failures in 1997 and 1998 Lincoln Navigator SUVs, Ford Expedition SUVs, and Ford F-150 trucks. On July 21, 1998, ODI closed PE98-024 because the failure rate was very low and once a failure occurs, vehicle control is easily maintained. For your constituents' information, we have enclosed the closing resume for PE98-024.

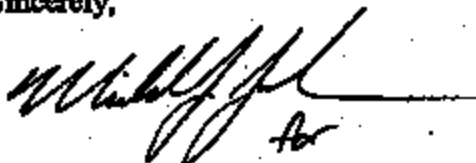
Following receipt of your correspondence, ODI conducted a thorough review of its database and other available data relative to reported problems associated with the steering and suspension systems in the Ford vehicles that were subject to PE98-024 and the TSBs referenced above. ODI's review revealed insufficient evidence to warrant revisiting this issue at this time.

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/voq>. 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

Enclosures