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February 28, 2005

2005 MAR -8 AM 12:11

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
Office of Defect Investigation  
400 7<sup>th</sup> Street, S. W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

To Whom It May Concern,

We purchased a 2002 Ford Explorer in December 2001. In October 2004, we received a recall letter from Ford Motor Company stating that the dealers will replace both strut mounting brackets and both hinges on the liftgate glass with new design parts, and the parts would be available in late November 2004. The safety recall was 04S20, and we would be notified when the parts were available. We did not receive the second letter.

The recall letter warned that until the recall has been performed, do not open or close your liftgate glass, with which we complied. My wife told me that the liftgate glass had opened on December 19, 2004 without anyone using the latch release. By the time the Explorer was repaired on February 1, 2005, the liftgate glass has opened two more times without anyone using the latch release.

On December 22, 2004, we noticed the crack in the plastic panel which is a part of the liftgate glass unit (see attached diagram). I called the dealership where we bought the Explorer and was told that the cracked plastic panel was not included in the recall. I was advised to contact a Ford Motor Company Customer Service Representative. The Representative advised that the cost of the repairs was my responsibility; inasmuch as, the Explorer is out of warranty.

I contacted the dealership's automotive body repair technician to schedule the repair. He advised that the plastic panel in the liftgate glass unit cracking is a common occurrence with 2002 Ford Explorer model. He further advised that he had repaired several, and in fact, was repairing one when I contacted him. When I asked him what was causing the plastic panels cracking, he stated that Ford Motor Company said that it was caused by "something to do with the window washing solution not being adequate." (The only place that I have had my Explorer serviced is at the dealership.)

It appears to me that an investigation is in order to determine if the original struts mounting brackets and hinges caused or contributed to the panel cracking. If in fact the struts mounting brackets and hinges were inadequate, this would/could have caused a torquing action that would have put stress on the plastic panel, this causing the panel to crack. The liftgate window coming unlatched would be a safety hazard, inasmuch as, it would allow exhaust fumes to enter the vehicle, as well as the integrity of the vehicle's structure would be compromised in the event of an accident.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I request a reply.

Sincerely,

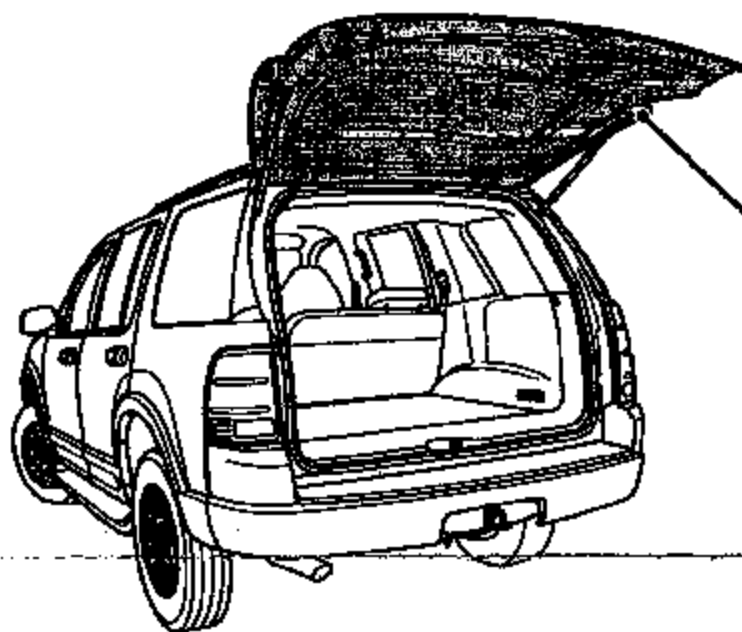
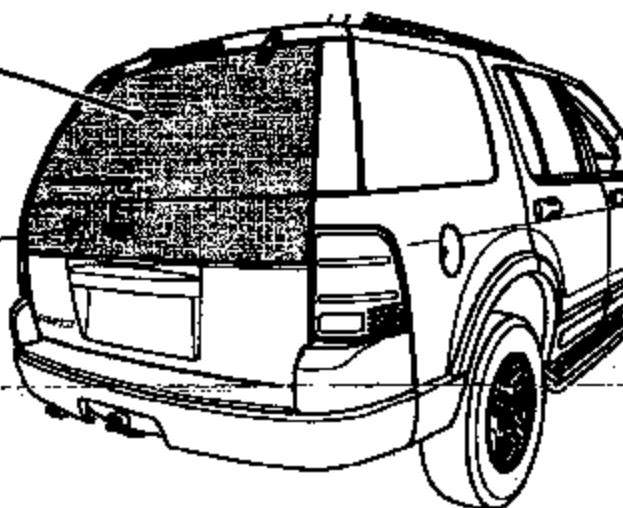
Richmond, Virginia

Mania  
3/9/05

**CUSTOMER INSTRUCTIONS  
UNTIL REPAIRS ARE COMPLETED**

**DO NOT  
OPEN/CLOSE GLASS**

*CRACK  
WAS  
HERE*



**OK TO  
OPEN LIFTGATE**



F. M. Ligon  
Ford Motor Company  
P.O. Box 1904  
Dearborn, Michigan 48121

F0081888

0293



2002 Explorer

Vehicle ID #: 1FMZU63E92Z

04S20

October, 2004

RICHMOND, VA

~~This notice is sent to you in accordance with the requirements of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act.~~

Ford Motor Company has decided that a defect which relates to motor vehicle safety exists in certain 2002 Ford Explorer and Mercury Mountaineer vehicles.

We apologize for this situation and want to assure you that, with your assistance, we will correct this condition. Our commitment, together with Ford and Lincoln Mercury dealers, is to provide you with the highest level of service and support possible.

**What is the issue?** In some of the affected vehicles, the liftgate window may drop unexpectedly when it is being operated. When the window drops it may strike a person nearby or the glass may break creating the potential for cuts or bruises.

**What will Ford and your dealer do?** Effective Late November 2004: At no charge, dealers will replace both strut mounting brackets and both hinges on the liftgate glass with new design parts. We expect these new design parts will be available late November 2004. We will notify you when parts are available so you can contact your dealer for an appointment to have Safety Recall 04S20 performed on your vehicle.

**How long will it take?** The time needed for this repair is less than one-half day. However, due to service scheduling requirements, your dealer may need your vehicle for a longer period of time. To ensure a proper repair, your dealer may also need your vehicle for a longer time when outside temperatures are very low.

**What are we asking you to do?** **WARNING:** Until this recall has been performed, do not open or close your liftgate glass. The larger liftgate door is not affected by this recall, so you can still use it to access the rear compartment of your vehicle. See the attached illustration for guidance. When parts become available, we will notify you and ask you to call your dealer to request a service date for Recall 04S20. At that time, provide the dealer with the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) of your vehicle. The VIN is printed near your name at the beginning of this letter.

If you do not already have a servicing dealer, you can access <http://www.genuinefordservice.com> for dealer addresses, maps, and driving instructions.

Please note: Federal law requires that any vehicle lessor receiving this recall notice must forward a copy of this notice to the lessee within ten days.

**Have you previously paid for this repair?**

If you paid to remedy the issue addressed in this notice, you may be eligible for a refund either through your dealer or directly from Ford Motor Company.

To verify eligibility and expedite reimbursement, give your paid original receipt to your dealer. Refund requests, including all required documentation, may also be mailed to Ford at P.O. Box 8251, Dearborn, Michigan 48121-8251. Refund requests mailed to Ford may take up to 60 days to process.

Detailed information regarding eligibility for Ford's reimbursement program and documentation requirements may be obtained by contacting the Ford Customer Relationship Center at 1-888-438-7332. Owners who have previously paid for this repair are still eligible to have the recall described in this letter performed.

**Have you changed your address or sold the vehicle?**

If you have, please fill out the enclosed prepaid postcard and mail it to us so we can update our records. If you have sold the vehicle, the information you provide on the postcard will be used to notify the new owner about this recall.

**Can we assist you further?**

If you have difficulty getting your vehicle repaired promptly and without charge, please contact your dealership's Service Manager for assistance.

If you still have concerns, please contact the Ford Motor Company Customer Relationship Center and one of our representatives will be happy to assist you.

Call 1-888-438-7332. For the hearing impaired call 1-800-232-5952 (TDD).

Office Hours: (Eastern Time Zone)

Monday - Friday: 8AM - 8PM

Saturday: 9AM - 5:30PM

If you wish to contact us through the Internet, our address is:

[www.ownerconnection.com](http://www.ownerconnection.com)

If you are still having difficulty getting your vehicle repaired in a reasonable time or without charge, you may write the Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street S.W., Washington, D. C. 20590 or call the toll free Auto Safety Hotline at 1-888-327-4238 or 1-800-424-9393.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Frank M. Ligon  
Director  
Service Engineering Operations

