



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

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 100148

Date Received

Repository

28-MAY-2005

Reference No.  
10122211

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name  
Address  
City ANCHORAGE Anchorage State AK Zip Code

Daytime Telephone Number  
907-877-7289

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 authorization, NHTSA WILL NOT provide your name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.

Signature of Owner Date 6/6/05

VEHICLE INFORMATION

17 digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side  
1FMCU9318 Make FORD Model ESCAPE Model Year 2005

Date Purchased 28-MAR-05 Dealer's Name and Telephone Number CAL WORTHING FORD Engine: No. Cylinders 6 Fuel Type: Gas

Original Owner  Dealer's City ANCHORAGE State AK Zip Code 99501

Transmission Type AUTOMATIC  Antilock Brakes  Cruise Control Powertrain 4 WHEEL DRIVE Vehicle Component Code 141100 AIR BAGS:FRONTAL:SENSOR/CONTROL MODULE Multiple Failure 50-100 Failures

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s) 26-MAR-2005 Failure Mileage 0-4000 Failure Speed 0-70 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: DOTM18ABC036)  Original Equipment  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), condition, and date(s).)

Crash  Yes  No Fire  Yes  No Number of Persons Injured Number of Deaths Reported to Police N

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: i.e. parts repaired or replaced (and if old part is available).

DT: NEW VEHICLE THAT HAS A WEIGHT SENSOR ON THE RIGHT FRONT PASSENGER SIDE AIR BAG. THIS ALLOWS THE AIR BAG TO BE ACTIVE OR DISABLED WITH THE WEIGHT OF A PERSON. THE SENSOR IS CALIBRATED BETWEEN 115-120 POUNDS. THEREFORE, IF THE PASSENGER WEIGHS LESS THAN 120 POUNDS THE AIR BAG IS DISABLED. SPOKE TO MANUFACTURER, AND THEY SPOKE TO ENGINEERS, WHO INDICATED THIS WAS A SNAKE CALIBRATION, AND COULD NOT BE CHANGED. \*AK  
Normal

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 what her 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.

Narrative Description of Incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies)

- Please see attached:
- 1) hard copy of complete and detailed ODI vehicle complaint
  - 2) Copy of original Cal Worthington's Ford's service department letter relating to passenger frontal sensor problem
  - 3) Copy of original Ford Escape Owners Guide section regarding Frontal passenger seat airbag enable parameters
  - 4) copy FMVSS 208 ~~P.124-125~~ P.124-125 Ford Escape Owners manual

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

U.S. Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

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

Priority Business  
Penalty for Private Use \$300



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES

**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**  
FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO 73173 WASHINGTON, D.C.

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY NATL. HWY. TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMIN.

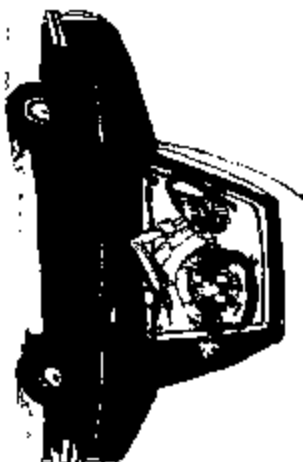
U.S. Department of Transportation  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
Office of Defects Investigation, NVS-218  
400 7th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20590  
(Att. Mr Jordan)



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U.S. Department of Transportation  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
www.nhtsa.gov



DOT Auto Safety Hotline  
(DASH) 2 DOT

**1-888-DASH-2-DOT**  
**1-888-327-4236**

and dial toll free at

**DASH2DOT**

TO REPORT VEHICLE SAFETY DEFECTS  
COMPLETE THIS FORM  
OR

**DOT AUTO SAFETY H...**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**



**VEHICLE  
OWNER'S  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Contents:**

- 1) **Hard copy of my ODI vehicle complaint.**
- 2) **Copy of Cal Worthington's Fords service department letter mentioned above.**
- 3) **Copy 2005 Ford Escape Owners Guide section regarding front passenger seat airbag enable parameters.**
- 4) **Copy Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 208.**
- 5) **Copy Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire, Form: OMB No. 2127-0008**

6/6/05

[REDACTED]  
Anchorage, AK  
[REDACTED]

Phone #: [REDACTED]

ODI #: 10122211

Vehicle Type: FORD ESCAPE 2005 XLT 4x4

VIN: 1FMCU93185 [REDACTED]

Vehicle purchased: 3/2005

Vehicle purchased from: Cal Worthington Ford, 431 Unga St. Anchorage Alaska, 99501

Vehicle serviced at: Cal Worthington Ford, 1950 Gambell St. Anchorage Alaska, 99501

Mileage: 4000 miles

**Dear Michael J. Jordan, Alberto A. Jimenez / ODI investigator:**

I filed a vehicle defect report on 5/26/05 with NHTSA. The specific vehicle defect complaint I have is that the front right passenger AIR BAG is deactivated when a person weighing equal to or less then 110-120 pounds is seated in the front passenger seat in a normal position. Four Ford employees have stated to me:

- 1) Andre Morris, assistant service manager at Cal Worthington ford, 1950 gambell St. Anchorage, AK, 99501.
- 2) Pat Mount, service manager, same address as #1.
- 3) Ilene (no surname given) at the Detroit based "Customer Relationship Center" Phone #: 1-800-392-3673.
- 4) Dwight (no surname given) I.D.# 3055 same address and phone as #3.

All four individuals stated that after consulting with Fords Dearborn, Michigan engineering department (note I was not allowed to speak with the Dearborn engineer's), Fords engineers informed the four Ford employees that the front passenger air bag sensor was indeed calibrated to between 110- 120 pounds and that it would disable the front passenger air bag if any person below that weight threshold was in the front seat. In addition, they stated that normal adult size passenger's below the 110-120 pound threshold weight would not effect the sensor weight calibration. Simply put if an adult sized individual in the front seat was between or below 110-120 pounds the passenger seat sensor would still disable (deactivate) the front passenger air bag regardless of them being of normal adult size. In addition, the four Ford employees stated that lowering the front passenger seat airbag sensor weight threshold below the stated 110-120 pounds sensor threshold was not possible. Finally, all four Ford personal stated to me, that they agreed with Ford's engineering staff in Dearborn that the system was working correctly and no additional alternatives, repairs, or options existed for me at this time. PLEASE NOTE I have and am including a copy of a Letter From Cal Worthington Ford, 1950 Gambell St. Anchorage Alaska, 99501 service department stating that Dearborn's engineers (hotline reference in letter) and they themselves (Cal Worthington Ford) agree that the front air bag system is working "properly". In addition, please note that the air bag deactivation (disable) light was illuminated with my wife seated properly in the front seat with seat belt buckled and car running and was witnessed by the Ford service technician at Cal Worthington Ford and this is also stated in the above-mentioned letter from Cal Worthington Fords service department.

**I would like to state:**

- 1) My wife would certainly be considered to be within normal US female adult size parameters. Which are in her specific case a Height of 5 foot 3 inches and Weight of 120 pounds. I think you would agree a large section of the adult US population is within these weight and size parameters.
- 2) I think in this case FORD MOTOR COMPANY is in clear violation of the Federal regulation "Revised / Unrevised Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 208" (copy included). As you know the appropriate prerequisites for "turning off" deactivating the front passenger air bag system are stated clearly there.
- 3) In the 2005 Ford Escape Owners Guide on page 125, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph Ford states: "The front passenger sensing system is designed to enable (may inflate) the right front passenger's frontal airbag anytime the system senses that a person of adult size is sitting properly in the front passenger seat". Please note I am including a copy of this page with this letter.
- 4) In all readily available consumer literature (including all Ford 2005 Escape consumer literature) concerning this vehicle up to or before March 2005 (when I purchased this vehicle) it does not state that a passenger weight threshold of 110-120 pounds exists for the frontal airbag to be turned on (enabled). In addition before purchase of this vehicle, upon inquiry I was informed verbally by Ford sales personal that the frontal airbag enable threshold was (a sensible) 78 pounds.
- 5) To date 5/26/05 I was informed there has been 4 other complaints regarding this specific frontal airbag problem in 2005 Ford Escapes filed with NHTSA.

**Conclusion:**

I think it is clear that the frontal airbag sensor threshold of between 110-120 pounds has been set far too HIGH and precludes large sections of the US adult and juvenile population. I believe this is an engineering / manufacturer mistake. I also realize that people do make mistakes, however it is in the WAY Ford Motor Company Personal refuse to rectify and are attempting to ignore this serious safety defect that has me deeply concerned for my family's safety as well as other Americans / non- Americans safety who may or may not be aware of this serious and potentially life threatening frontal airbag problem. To date, to my knowledge there has been no serious or fatal injuries connected or related to this defect however the optimal window of opportunity to save people from serious injury or death may be fading fast. Thus, I would urge as rapid a response as possible from NHTSA ODI (perhaps in the form of a vehicle recall). Finally, I would like to say that it is rare one finds him or herself in a position to potentially stop the useless and senseless injury or death of so many people, because of this, I am sincerely urging all concerned at NHTSA ODI to act in as appropriate, rapid, and comprehensive manner as humanly possible to stop this next generation of senseless auto related injuries / deaths before they begin to occur, which I feel unfortunately will be soon, based on the serious nature of this frontal airbag defect.

I sincerely appreciate your help.  
Thank you,



## Seating and Safety Restraints

- one or more impact and safing sensors
- a readiness light and tone
- a diagnostic module
- and the electrical wiring which connects the components

The RCM (restraints control module) monitors its own internal circuits and the supplemental air bag electrical system wiring (including the impact sensors, the system wiring, the air bag system readiness light, the air bag back up power and the air bag ignitors).

## Seating and Safety Restraints

- a front passenger takes his/her weight off of the seat for a period of time,
- A smaller person, such as a child who has outgrown child restraints, or a small adult occupies the front passenger seat.

When the front passenger seat is occupied and the sensing system has turned off the passenger's frontal airbag, the "passenger airbag off" or "pass airbag off" indicator will light and stay lit to remind you that the front passenger frontal airbag is off. When the front passenger seat is not occupied (empty seat) or in the event that the front passenger frontal airbag is enabled (may inflate), the indicator light will be unlit. The indicator light is located in the center stack of the instrument panel just below the radio.

The front passenger sensing system is designed to turn off the front passenger's frontal airbag when a rear facing infant seat, a forward-facing child restraint, or a booster seat is detected. If the child restraint has been installed and the indicator is not lit, then turn the vehicle off, remove the child restraint from the vehicle and reinstall the restraint following the child restraint manufacturer's directions.

The front passenger sensing system is designed to enable (may inflate) the right front passenger's frontal airbag anytime the system senses that a person of adult size is sitting properly in the front passenger seat. When the passenger sensing system has allowed the airbag to be enabled, the indicator will be unlit and stay unlit to remind you that the airbag is enabled (may inflate).

If a person of adult-size is sitting in the front passenger's seat, but the "passenger airbag off" or "pass airbag off" indicator is lit, it could be that the person isn't sitting properly in the seat. If this happens, turn the vehicle off and ask the person to place the seatback in the full upright position, then sit upright in the seat, centered on the seat cushion, with the person's legs comfortably extended. Restart the vehicle and have the person remain in this position for about two minutes. This will allow the system to detect that person and then enable the passenger's airbag. If the indicator lamp remains lit even after this, then the occupant should be advised to ride in the back seat.

### Front passenger sensing system

The front passenger sensing system will turn off the front passenger's frontal airbag under certain conditions. The front passenger seat-mounted side airbag (if equipped) will be deactivated if the sensor detects an empty seat; otherwise, the seat-mounted side airbag will be enabled. The front passenger sensing system works with sensors that are part of the front passenger's seat and safety belt. The sensors are designed to detect the presence of a properly-seated occupant and determine if the front passenger's frontal airbag should be enabled (may inflate) or not.

The front passenger sensing system is designed to meet the regulatory requirements of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 208 and is designed to turn off the front passenger's frontal airbag if:

- the front passenger seat is unoccupied, or has small/medium objects in the front seat,
- the system determines that an infant is present in a rear-facing infant seat that is installed according to the manufacturer's instructions,
- the system determines that a small child is present in a forward-facing child restraint that is installed according to the manufacturer's instructions,
- the system determines that a small child is present in a booster seat,





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

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

NVS-216 aaj

Dear Consumer:

As a result of your recent report to the DOT Auto Safety Hotline (DOT Hotline), we have recorded that report on the enclosed Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ) form. Please review the form and make changes, additions and corrections as necessary. Additionally, please provide a more detailed description of the failure(s) you reported that you believe is(are) relevant to safety. Also, if available, include copies of repair invoices, letters to the manufacturer, or any other document related to the problem(s) you reported. If a crash or fire occurred, include a copy of the police or fire department report.

It is helpful to be as thorough as possible in your report so that our ability to use your report will be maximized. If you do not have the information, it is not necessary to complete all the boxes. However, it is very difficult to identify the scope of a vehicle problem unless the vehicle identification number (VIN) is known. The VIN is located inside the vehicle on the dashboard adjacent to the left (driver's side) of the windshield pillar and on the driver's door or the driver's door jam. It may also be listed on the dealer's repair invoices. When reporting a tire problem, the brand name, tire name and complete tire size should be included. If possible also provide the DOT tire identification number. It is usually located near the rim flange of the tire on either side of the tire.

The Privacy Act prohibits our agency from identifying you to the manufacturer without your permission. If you wish to give us that permission, please mark the appropriate authorization box and sign the form to allow us to provide your name to the manufacturer. The information you provide may assist the manufacturer and NHTSA in determining if a safety-related defect exists.

Any information provided is entirely voluntary. There is no consequence or penalty of any kind if you do not wish to provide it. We seek this information to develop both statistical and investigative evidence that will help identify potential safety related problems in vehicle or vehicle equipment, e.g., tires, child safety seats, jacks, etc.

When completed, please fold and staple or tape the form so that the pre-address portion of the form is on the outside. If a larger envelope is used, tape the VOQ form to the larger envelope so that the pre-address portion of the form is showing.

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.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

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

Enclosures: VOQ  
DOT Hotline Pamphlet



DOT AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE  
888-DASH-2-DOT  
888-327-4238

**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).**