

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.

ADD #  
10122266

10/19/05

Refer to ADVSC  
as PAB,  
NAR  
GAB  
6/19/05

Joseph Crapanzano  
1445 Virginia Court  
Anchorage, AK

5/26/05

ODI #: 10122211

Vehicle Type: FORD ESCAPE 2005 XLT 4x4

VIN: 1FMCU93185K

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: 3600

**Dear ODI investigator:**

I filled 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 sensor threshold was not possible. Finally, all three Ford personal stated to me, that they agreed with Fords engineering staff in Dearborn that the system was working correctly and no additional alternative's, 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 engineer's (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 in 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". 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 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 filled 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 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 families 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 (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 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).

 Several air bag system components get hot after inflation. Do not touch them after inflation.

 If the air bag has deployed, the air bag will not function again and must be replaced immediately. If the air bag is not replaced, the unrepaired area will increase the risk of injury in a collision.

### 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,

## 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.

 Even with the front passenger sensing system, children 12 and under should be properly restrained in the back 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.



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).