



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
(1-888-327-4238)
INTERNET: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 100148

Date Received
2005 OCT -6 AM 6:01
31-AUG-2005

Repository
Reference No.
10134047

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name
Address
City SPARROWBUSH State NY Zip Code

Daytime Telephone Number
Evening Telephone Number
E-mail Address

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of this report to the manufacturer of your vehicle?
In the absence of an address to the vehicle manufacturer. YES NO
Signature of Owner Date 09/26/05

17 digit Vehicle Identification Number (located at bottom of windshield on driver's side)
2MEFM74
Make MERCURY Model GRAND MARQUIS Model Year 2004
Date Purchased 09-FEB-04 Dealer's Name and Telephone Number PALM BEACH FORD, LINCOLN, MERCURY Engine: No. Cylinders 8 Fuel Type: Gas
Original Owner Dealer's City WEST PALM BEACH State FL Zip Code

Transmission Type AUTOMATIC Antilock Brakes Cruise Control Powertrain REAR WHEEL DRIVE Vehicle Component Code 162810 STRUCTURE:BODY:HOOD:HINGE AND ATTACHMENTS
Multiple Failures: 1

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s) 27-APR-2005 Failure Mileage 12000 Failure Speed 70

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Make Tire Model (Name or Number) Tire Size (Example P215/85R15)
DOT No. (Example: DOTM18ABC038) 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 check the box if the incident was Fatality, Structural, and Injury-Only
Crash Yes No Fire Yes No
Number of Persons Injured 0 Number of Deaths 0 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: WHILE THE CONSUMER WAS DRIVING AT 70 MPH ON 4-27-06 THE HOOD OF VEHICLE FLEW UP. WHEN THIS HAPPENED IT HIT THE WINDSHIELD AND BROKE IT. WHEN THE VEHICLE WAS INSPECTED ON SITE THEY SAID THAT IT WAS DUE TO A MISSING BOLT IN THE HOOD LATCH. THIS OCCURRED WITHOUT PREVIOUS WARNING. THE CONSUMER WAS NO LONGER IN DIRECT POSSESSION OF THE VEHICLE. *AK

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 advise the NHTSA in determining whether 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.

September 15, 2005

Mr. Alberto A. Jimenez, Chief
Correspondence Research Division
Office of Defects Investigation
National Highway Safety Administration, NVS-216
400 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

Reference No. 10134947

Dear Mr. Jimenez:

Today I received the DOT Auto Safety Hotline Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire and I am enclosing it along with copies of correspondence from me to Ford/Lincoln/Mercury.

I would like to point out that my first immediate correspondence (May 2, 2005 and this happened on April 27, 2005) was directed to Susan M. Cischke, Vice President of Environmental and Safety Engineering, Ford Motor Company. My purpose in directing my correspondence to this person was to alert and have this problem investigated. When this produced no response, I then wrote to the Al Giombetti, President of Lincoln Mercury on August 3, 2005. This correspondence resulted in a telephone call from Customer Relations on August 31, 2005. This call informed me that the customer relation's representative only had a synopsis of what happened and she had me repeat what happened. She also stated that the vin number of the car was not registered to my husband (it had been fixed and resold), that there wasn't any provision for any compensation under the manufacturing warranty for other expenses incurred as a result of this defect, that it had not been assigned a file number and that it was closed. Does this mean that the defect was not being investigated? She had me on the phone a good forty-five minutes. **AT NO TIME WAS THE SAFETY ISSUE ADDRESSED OR WAS IT STATED THAT SOMEONE WOULD GET BACK TO ME REGARDING AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE SAFETY ISSUE.** As of this date, I can't even think how many people are driving around putting themselves in harms way without this bolt.

Regarding the Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire, the only items I have changed are:

1. Owner Information is changed to [REDACTED] as filled out as [REDACTED] I am the owner's wife. I was the driver at the time this happened.
2. The Authorization to provide a copy of the report to the manufacturer of the vehicle portion of the questionnaire. I changed the box to yes and signed my name.

I am very interested in highway safety. As an employee of Potters Industries, Inc., I did statistics and research (as noted on the credits page) for a publication, "HIGHWAY SAFETY 1981 THE PROBLEMS.THE RESULTS.THE FUTURE." This was a presentation given in July of 1981 to the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation of the Committee on Public Works and Transportation of the U.S. House of Representatives. This publication is now a government dossier.

2.

I do hope this information will help in any investigative evidence on the part of the NHTSA and the manufacturer and I thank you.

Sincerely,

Sparrowbush, NY

Enclosures

File

August 3, 2005

Al Giombetti, President
Lincoln Mercury
16800 Executive Plaza Drive
PO Box 6248
Dearborn, MI 48121

Dear [REDACTED]

First, thank you for the CD for taking the survey on our new 2005 Mercury Grand Marquis.

Second, We are enclosing correspondence dated May 2, 2005 via Certified Mail to [REDACTED] Vice-President Environmental and Safety Engineering, which is self-explanatory. As of this date we have not received an explanation or any correspondence in response to this correspondence. We have been and are loyal Mercury owners as exemplified as follows:

- 1980 Mercury Zephyr
- 1097 Mercury Cougar (still have)
- 2004 Mercury Grand Marquis
- 2005 Mercury Grand Marquis
- + Many other Ford/Lincoln/Mercury vehicles

We are not seeking a lawsuit but our purpose in writing the above mentioned letter was for some explanation and to alert to a defect in numerous vehicles of this year (2004) Mercury Grand Marquis. Also, we would welcome some compensation for the expense this defect cost us. Thank God there were no personal injuries or a multi-car catastrophe. With all the employee discounts that are floating around, the fact that our correspondence has gone unacknowledged is very disheartening to loyal consumers. An explanation, at the very least, was anticipated.

Again, we are anticipating a response as a matter of courtesy and principle and if you need any additional information regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Sparrowbush, NY
Telephone: [REDACTED]

Enclosures: Letter and Certified Mail Receipt

File

May 2, 2005

Susan M. Cischke, Vice President
Environmental and Safety Engineering
Ford Motor Company
One American Road
Dearborn, MI 48126

Re: 2004 Mercury Grand Marquis
Vin. #: 2MEFM74W [REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Cischke:

I am writing to you to inform you how our above vehicle traumatized my husband and me on April 27, 2005.

We are retired snowbirds and purchased our 2004 Grand Marquis last February at Palm Beach Ford/Mercury. We paid cash for this car and it was going to be the answer to travelling back and forth (1325 miles) to West Palm Beach and our home in Sparrowbush, New York for a couple of years. We chose this vehicle for safety, comfort, large trunk, etc. We were also happy that we were averaging 400 miles to a tank of gas, not bad for an eight-cylinder vehicle.

This year's trip back to New York and only about one hundred fifty miles out on the trip with no warning the hood flew up and crashed into the windshield. At the time we were on I-95, Mile marker 234, Northbound, approximately thirty-five miles north of Titusville, in the State of Florida. I was driving at the time and travelling at about seventy miles an hour (the speed limit) in the slow lane. Thank God I didn't get spastic and throw my hands in front of my face and jam on the brakes but was able to see in the inch or so between the bottom of the broken windshield and the edge of the hood to get the car to the side of the road. The two of us got out of the car shaking and I felt like I was also going to throw up and have diarrhea, we tried to calm down and decide what's next. It was hard to calm down when we thought of the disastrous tragedy that could have occurred with all the tractor trailers on I-95, or that the hood didn't completely come off the car and fly over the top and hit someone behind us and so on.

The next thing we did was to contact the Road Side Assistance that came with this vehicle and I have to tell you she was excellent. She said she was sorry this happened to us and made sure we were okay and not in any immediate danger where we were. She also stated that a tow truck would be to us within sixty minutes and that she would call back to make sure the tow truck had found us. The operator also stated where the tow truck would take us and gave me the phone number.

Not long after this the Florida Highway Safety Patrol stopped and the two gentlemen inquired what our situation was and if there was anything they could do to facilitate us getting help. At this time the tow truck arrived. The two safety patrol guys, my husband and the tow truck driver showed me what happened. **A BOLT WAS MISSING FROM THE LATCH MECHANISM FOR THE HOOD. A MANUFACTURING DEFECT.** We were lucky we weren't killed in that situation on that dangerous interstate highway. The hood had flanged out due to the impact and the tow truck operator had to borrow a hammer from the highway safety guys and pound the edges of the hood in to get the hood to go down so he could strap it and flat bed it to the dealership we were going to. **OUR BEAUTIFUL NEW PERFECT CAR ONLY HAD TWELVE THOUSAND AND SOME MILES ON IT AT THIS POINT.**

The first person you meet sets the tone for the way you feel and let me tell you this guy doesn't have a clue how to handle people. We arrived at the McCotter Dealership in Titusville and went into the body shop office and the tow truck operator (Bill) tells the man behind the counter what's what. My husband has a hearing loss and so I was the go between. The guy behind the counter asked what our insurance company was (not I'm sorry this happened to you or are you alright, I'm still shaking at this point and it's over an hour after the fact). At this time I stated it was a warranty issue and that the car only had twelve thousand and some miles on it. He then said, in an accusing manner, oh sure, 12,000 miles and a bolt fell out. He then said he would have to run an OASIS? Report on the car to make sure of the history of the car and that it hadn't been in any accidents (he could have done that without telling us in such an accusing manner). I told him we had just switched insurance companies and that pictures of the car had just been taken and that it was perfect before this happened. The time is now about 12:45 PM and this happened between 10:30 and 10:45 AM. He stated his boss was out to lunch and wouldn't be back till 2:00 PM as they had meetings all morning. He also stated phone calls would have to be made. **AT THIS POINT IN TIME HE DID NOT EVEN COME OUT FROM BEHIND THE COUNTER AND GO AND LOOK AT THE VEHICLE, WHICH WAS STILL ON THE FLATBED TOW TRUCK.** We then suggested that he get someone higher than his boss as we were stranded and maybe some phone calls should be made to get the ball rolling, as none of this was our fault.

The determination was made that the windshield had to be replaced, the pneumatic lifters for the hood replaced, the hood, hinges, fenders painted where they were chipped and, of course, **THE DEFECTIVE LATCH.** We were informed that it could be as long as three or four days and our options were:

- . Take us to Melbourne to fly home (at our expense) and...
- . Have the repaired car shipped to us (at our expense) not an option for us because our life, important papers, etc. after five months in Florida were in that car.
- . Stay at the Best Western (at our expense)

3.

We were expecting to be home by Thursday evening, April 28, 2005 and were to baby-sit our grandchildren, whom we hadn't seen in three months, so our children could attend a wedding. We called and they made other arrangements just in case we didn't get home on time.

At this time the Assistant Manager of the dealership (who was very nice and was compassionate regarding what happened to us) appeared and my husband asked what we could do to make this go away because we no longer wanted that car because:

- . We no longer felt safe in it.
- . Given the information that an OASIS Report (body shop guy) We knew we would no longer get what the car was worth as it was in its perfect condition.

We looked at the new cars and picked one and the final result was that they gave us a trade-in value for the 2004 as if it were in the pristine condition that it was. It still cost us \$4650.09 and we weren't happy to be buying a new car at this time. This is supposed to be a happy experience and we were perfectly happy with our 2004 new car. It's now 4:45 PM, and we haven't had lunch yet (and I'm still thinking of the body shop boss that had one hour and a half for lunch) and we still have to unpack our belongings and repack them. Things that would have been riding in the air-conditioned car instead of baking in the car all afternoon in the hot Florida sun. Belongings like a laptop computer, camcorder, digital camera, a plant someone gave me as my mom just passed away, food from our condo in a cooler that would have been fine but now can be thrown away, etc. Not only was it so hot doing this but also to make matters worse it started to rain, a Florida torrential downpour.

We're finally on our way again and drove till 11:00 PM and could only get as far as the Georgia/South Carolina border and to make matters worse when we checked into the motel that night when I removed my slacks my left leg is all black and blue and I have no idea how that happened in all the excitement. Also, my husband's head was all sunburned. Day two dawned for the trip home and I am still shaky and no longer feel comfortable behind the wheel. The result is my husband had to do all the driving.

The domino effect is that our children got the other grandparents to baby-sit and grandmas fell and had to get ten stitches. They live an hour and a half from our kids and so had to get friends of our children to take Grandma to the hospital.

4.

I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW HOW THIS MANUFACTURING DEFECT HAPPENED AND THINK YOU NEED TO ADD ANOTHER SAFETY CHECK POINT TO THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YOU CURRENTLY ADVERTISE BECAUSE EITHER THE PERSON WHO INSTALLED THIS LATCH MECHAISM OR THE ROBOT DEFINITELY DROPPED THE BALL ON THIS ONE. THE BIG DOLLAR PRICE TAGS ON THESE CARS (BUY AMERICAN) DOESN'T MATCH THE QUALITY PRODUCED WITHOUT REGARD TO PEOPLE'S SAFETY. I WOULD HOPE THAT WE WOULD BE TAKEN CARE OF THE WAY THE STOCKHOLDER IS!

WE'RE OUT \$4,650.09 PLUS THE EXTRA SALES TAX WHEN WE REGISTER THIS VEHICLE IN NEW YORK AND HOURS AND HOURS OF AGGRAVATION. WE DO FEEL GRATEFUL THAT THE GOD WAS WATCHING OVER US AS THIS COULD HAVE BEEN A MULTI CAR/TRACTOR TRAILER CATASTROPHY AND WITH ALL THE SMASHING THIS MANUFACTURING DEFECT WOULD HAVE NEVER BEEN DETECTED. I WOULD HOPE YOU WOULD LOOK INTO THIS SO NO ONE HAS TO HAVE THIS HAPPEN TO HIM OR HER.

We are enclosing pictures of what was our beautiful new car. We also are anticipating a timely response.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Sparrowbush, NY
[REDACTED]

Enclosures



