



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

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

NOV 09 2005

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Bronx, NY [REDACTED]

NVS-216 et
Ref. No. 10136708

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your correspondence dated August 25, 2005, requesting assistance in obtaining reimbursement from Ford Motor Company (Ford) for damages to your model year (MY) 1998 Ford Expedition vehicle, which you believe to be related to a safety recall. Your correspondence was received on September 7, 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 help us determine whether an investigation into a possible safety defect or recall inadequacy is warranted.

On November 19, 2004, NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) opened a safety defect investigation (PE04-078) into 36 reports alleging the occurrence of an engine compartment fire in MY 2000 Ford F-150, Ford Expedition, and Lincoln Navigator vehicles, all of which indicated the vehicle was parked with the ignition turned to the off position. On January 27, 2005, Ford notified NHTSA that it would conduct a safety recall (NHTSA Campaign No. 05V-017) to remedy a defect determined to exist with the speed control deactivation switch (SCDS) in certain MY 2000 and 2001 Ford F-150, Ford Expedition, and Lincoln Navigator vehicles, which could result in an engine compartment fire.



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888-DASH-2-DOT
888-327-4286

On March 22, 2005, ODI upgraded PE04-078 to an engineering analysis (EA05-005) and redefined the scope of the investigation to include certain MY 1995 through 2002 Ford F-150 and MY 1997 through 2002 Ford Expedition and Lincoln Navigator vehicles, minus those vehicles subject to Ford's safety recall. An engineering analysis is a more detailed and complete technical analysis of the character and scope of an alleged defect. The engineering analysis has been opened to determine whether other Ford vehicles equipped with a similar speed control deactivation switch should have been included in the safety recall. On September 7, 2005, Ford notified NHTSA that it would expand the scope of its previous safety recall to include certain MY 1994 through 2002 Ford F-150, MY 1994 through 1999 Ford F-250, MY 1994 through 1996 Ford Bronco, MY 1997 through 2002 Ford Expedition, MY 1998 through 2002 Lincoln Navigator, and MY 2002 Lincoln Blackwood vehicles. The expansion of Ford's previous safety recall has been recorded as NHTSA Campaign No. 05V-388. While vehicles equipped with SCDSs that have experienced a high rate of failure have now been addressed by Ford's safety recalls, there is a remaining population of vehicles failing at lower rates that have not been addressed. NHTSA will continue to investigate the non-recalled vehicles containing SCDSs that are powered at all times to develop an engineering reason as to why these vehicles are not experiencing the fire rate observed in the recalled vehicle populations.

For your information, we have enclosed a copy of the opening resume for PE04-078, Ford's letter dated January 27, 2005, the summary of NHTSA Campaign No. 05V-017, the closing resume for PE04-078, the opening resume for EA05-005, Ford's letter dated September 7, 2005, and the summary of NHTSA Campaign No. 05V-388.

Chapter 301 of Title 49 of the United States Code (U.S.C.) requires a manufacturer of motor vehicles or items of motor vehicle equipment that contain a defect relating to motor vehicle safety to remedy the defect without charge. However, the statute does not authorize the NHTSA to require manufacturers to reimburse owners for collateral costs associated with a safety recall (e.g., lost wages while the vehicle is being repaired, car rentals, damage caused by the defect, etc.). Nor does the statute authorize the Federal government to reimburse vehicle owners for any costs associated with safety recalls. If you have already had a failure believed to be related to a recall and have not done so, you may consider contacting your local Consumer Protection Agency, Better Business Bureau, or your State's Office of the Attorney General for assistance regarding your request. You may also wish to consult with a private attorney of your choice who should be able to advise you on appropriate action.

You can contact our toll-free Vehicle Safety Hotline (Hotline) at 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 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/ivoq>. 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