



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 ☐

2006 MAY 2006 AM 8:30

Reference No.
10155381

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name

Address

City LEETONIA

State OH

Zip Code

Daytime Telephone Number

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 4/24/06

VEHICLE INFORMATION

17 digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side
12WFT51L

Make
MERCURY

Model
COLGAR

Model Year
2000

Date Purchased
01-JUL-00

Dealer's Name and Telephone Number
COLUMBIANA FORD 330-482-3831

Engine:
No. Cylinders 6

Fuel Type:
Gas

Original Owner
☒

Dealer's City
COLUMBIANA

State
OH

Zip Code
44109

Transmission Type
AUTOMATIC

☒ Anti-lock Brakes
No Park Lock
☒ Cruise Control

Powertrain
FRONT WHEEL DRIVE

Vehicle Component Code
134000 VISIBILITY: SUN ROOF ASSEMBLY

Multiple Failure: 1

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s)
14-APR-2006

Failure Mileage
80353

Failure Speed
20

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: DOTM153ABC136)

☐ 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), crash(es), and injury(ies).)

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).

DOT*: THE CONTACT STATED WHILE DRIVING 20MPH, THE SUNROOF WAS OPENED BY A POWER CONTROL WHICH PARTIALLY ELEVATED THE SUNROOF. AFTERWARDS, THERE WAS A POPPING SOUND. THE EXPOSED SUNROOF ASSEMBLY CAUGHT AIR WHICH RIPPED THE ASSEMBLY CAUSING MINOR DAMAGE. THE VEHICLE WAS NOT SEEN BY A DEALER FOR INSPECTION.

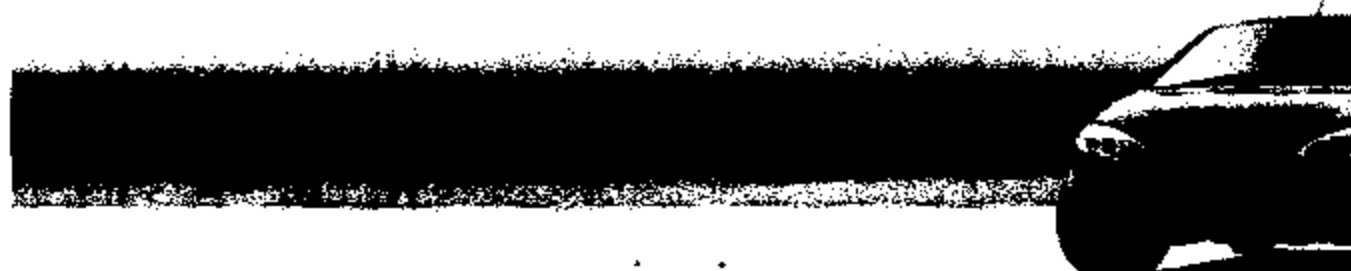
Include, if available: Police/Tire Department Report, Photos, and Repair Invoice.

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 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.



COUGARSUNROOF.COM

When the
shines

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FAQS (Frequently Asked Questions)

What is the problem with '99 and 2000 Mercury Cougar sunroofs?

To understand the design flaws in the sunroof, you first need to understand how the transport mechanism it works. The sunroof is moved along its tracks by two arms. Each of those arms is attached to a metal guide inside the track, controlling the sunroof tilt and its position on the track. Each of the metal guides is connected to gears that are driven by the sunroof motor. In the 1999 and 2000 Mercury Cougar, those metal guides are connected to the gears by a small piece of plastic. (Yes, a piece of plastic.) Often in an alarmingly short period of time, the plastic becomes insufficiently strong to withstand the strain of the sunroof weight (when open) and the strain and closing the sunroof, and one or both of these pieces of plastic break, causing the entire sunroof to be damaged. This often happens when the sunroof is partially open, and owners may be unable to close the sunroof, causing damage to their car's interior. Many owners report having to "break the other side" of their sunroof in order to close it before an impending rainstorm. For some pictures of the sunroof parts and an additional explanation of how the sunroof works, see [this thread](#) at NewCougar.org's forum. [Please note that, unfortunately, the repair that is attempted by the author of the thread does not succeed.]

The sunroofs in 1999 and 2000 Mercury Cougars have two design flaws. The first flaw is that the metal guides are connected to the sunroof gears by plastic parts that are incapable of sustaining the weight and strain of the sunroof operation. The second flaw is that the pieces of plastic are not replaceable. The entire sunroof assembly is a single component, welded and riveted together, so when the first design flaw manifests itself, the only solution is to replace the entire sunroof assembly, including the motor, arms, gears, drive, etc. The retail price for this replacement part (what Ford/Mercury service centers will charge you) is around \$950 USD. Obviously, that does not include the labor necessary to replace the part.

How prevalent is the problem?

The easiest thing to do, go to [the list](#) and read the stories and problems of other people with the same problem. [This thread](#) at NewCougar.org's forum is also a great place to find people with the same problem. *Just opened - our own forum. Start posting your stories and questions there.*

Is there any way to get the dealer to do this repair for less money?

Many people have had success in getting this defect addressed by their dealer at a reduced cost, even when they were out of warranty. This is often referred to as "dealer loyalty", "good-faith service", or "out-of-warranty reduction". The odds of getting a similar break can be greatly increased if you 1) bought the car new at that dealership and your service work done at that dealership regularly since then. Most people who have been successful obtain a reduction report paying between \$100-\$300 for the entire repair (Ford pays for parts, you pay for labor). As

the Service Manager with any information (including a print-out of the list) you can find about this problem.

Can I fix this problem myself?

Assuming you are somewhat mechanically inclined, it's likely that you can fix this problem yourself for far less dealer will charge you.

Can I buy a replacement sunroof assembly at less than retail and replace it myself?

Yes you can. It's not cheap, but it's cheaper. The part number for the replacement sunroof assembly is F6R2. One place where you can buy this part yourself is a fordpartsonline.com. In the section of the page titled "Select Part Number", choose Mercury, and enter the part number above.

If you have documented the process and wish to share it with others, please go to the [contact page](#) and let us know.

Can I fix it myself without replacing the entire sunroof assembly?

Unfortunately, there have been no successful reports. One person attempted to reform the plastic pieces with epoxy, and his solution worked for a week, but then broke again. You can find detailed pictures and description attempts [here](#) at NewCougar.org's forum.

Can I find a replacement sunroof assembly at a salvage yard?

If you're persistent and lucky. Several people have reported success in finding wrecked Cougars with intact sunroof assemblies, while many more report that the problem is so pervasive, and wrecked new Cougars are so few, that they can be found at salvage yards nearby. Also keep in mind that if you find intact sunroof tracks at a salvage yard, the tracks are in a '99 or '00 Cougar, the tracks may break again (because you're replacing the broken plastic with plastic).

What are the symptoms of this problem?

Beyond the obvious symptom is that your sunroof will not open, or will not close, there are several telltale signs. sunroof's failure is due to broken plastic within the sunroof tracks. First, the motor should still sound like it is working properly when you press the transport button. You may have heard a cracking sound when trying to open or close the sunroof, after which it would no longer open or close. It is possible that only one side of the sunroof will move, meaning that one of the two plastic pieces has broken. If both of the plastic pieces are broken (fairly common), you may find that the sunroof will still move but only when you run the motor all the way to the back (which would ordinarily mean that the sunroof should be completely open.) This is caused by the remaining portion of plastic in the track sliding all the way to the back and pushing up the back of the sunroof.

Is Ford Motor Company aware of this problem?

Yes. Not only has Ford been made aware of this problem on numerous occasions by its customers who have this problem, but the maker of the sunroof (which is purportedly an OEM part) fixed the primary design flaw in the sunroof assembly by replacing the plastic parts with aluminum, and Mercury Cougars made in model year '01 and '02 received the corrected sunroof assembly. Likewise, if you replace the sunroof assembly with a new one, that new one will have aluminum parts. Data gathered from the list indicates that less than 2% of broken Cougar sunroofs are from '02 model Cougars, so it appears that the design flaw has been corrected.

One might think that Ford Motor Company, with its "Quality is Job 1" motto, would be embarrassed at this gaffe, and would go out of their way to, at a minimum, make this repair somehow less expensive for its customers.

How much will it cost to have this repaired at the dealer?

The retail price for the replacement sunroof assembly is currently around \$950 USD. The labor cost obviously

price quotations reported range from \$1200-\$1500 including parts and labor. If the Ford Service Manager or pay for labor, expect the bill to be around \$300 USD.

Why are you so upset about this — If the warranty is up, shouldn't you expect to pay for the cost of your car?

1. It's an engineering defect.
2. They know it's a defect because they fixed it in the '01 model, replacing the plastic parts with metal.
3. Beyond the poor engineering of the defect itself, the sunroof track is also badly engineered because it is serviceable. So a \$1 piece of broken plastic translates into a \$1300 repair bill for hundreds of Cougar.
4. Instead of losing some money and standing behind their product, Ford not only sticks their customers but they profit from their own poor engineering.
 - o large markup on retail cost of part (you can buy it yourself for more than \$200 less).
 - o profit for dealers performing service.
 - o not even waiving the diagnostic fee (approx. \$75) to people who won't pay for the repair.



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From: cramerac@ford.com
To: LMLYP24@comcast.net
Subject: Ford Motor Company
Date: Fri, 14 Apr 2006 14:22:53 +0000

Dear Richard,

Thank you for contacting the Ford Motor Company Customer Relationship Center regarding the sunroof concern you are having with your 2000 Mercury Cougar.

We would like to assist you; however, in order to process your request more information is needed. Please include your original message with the following additional information to allow us to proceed. If you would prefer to provide this information over the phone, you may call us toll free at 1-800-392-3673 between the hours of 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday. Hearing impaired callers with access to a TDD may contact us by calling 1-800-232-5952.

Home Phone Number:
Vehicle Identification Number:
Odometer Reading: 80,353
Servicing Dealership:

We consider the satisfaction of our customers one of our most important objectives. If you have any other inquiries or concerns, please feel free to contact us and we will be happy to address them for you.

Sincerely,
Alice
Customer Relationship Center
Ford Motor Company

[THREAD ID:1-2UJCL3]

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 4/13/2006 07:51:28 PM
To:
Cc:
Subject: AskKate2000 / Mercury / Cougar Vehicle Problems

First Name: [REDACTED] EMail Title: [REDACTED]

Last Name: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

City: Leetonia
State: OH

ZIP: [REDACTED]

EMail Address: [REDACTED]

Vehicle Owner: Yes

Telephone Number: [REDACTED]

1ZWFT61LQY [REDACTED]

Model Year: 2000
Brand: Mercury
Model: Cougar
VIN Number:
Mileage: 80,000

Category of Query/Concern: Vehicle Problems

Description of Issue/Concern: Hello,

I having a problem with my sunroof. I was going over to my brothers house today and when I went to put it up the rail came seperated from the track and the whole sunroof almost flew off the car. I went to my local Ford dealer where I bought this car new. They told me it would be 1,000 dollars just for the parts. I looked online to see if anyone else had a problem like this and I found a website called www.cougarsunroof.com

This entire site is just about this problem which was later fixed in the 2001 and later models. I would like to buy a Ford again soon so I was wondering if there is any way to get help paying for this repair. Thanks [REDACTED]

[[Back](#)]

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From: crcmerc@ford.com
To: lmty24@comcast.net
Subject: Ford Motor Company
Date: Fri, 14 Apr 2006 20:05:37 +0000

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for contacting the Ford Motor Company Customer Relationship Center with your additional comments.

Feedback such as yours allows us to examine our practices and policies to ensure that we meet or exceed the expectations of our customers. We have documented your feedback which will be forwarded to the respective departments involved. We regret that you have not had a favorable experience, but appreciate the time you have taken to write us.

If you have any other inquiries or concerns, please feel free to contact us and we will be happy to address them for you.

Sincerely,
Alice
Customer Relationship Center
Ford Motor Company

[THREAD ID:1-2UJCL3]

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 4/14/2006 03:51:49 PM
To: crcmerc@ford.com
Subject: Re: Ford Motor Company

Hello. I just received you email which I thought might contain some better news. I was wondering if you might be able to answer a couple questions for me. The first one being this. If I had been driving yesterday and the roof had came off and killed a driver behind me, how would ford explain why they changed the rails on the sun roof from plastic to metal on the cougars later than 2000. The other question I have would be what am I supposed to do with a car that has a hole in the roof that is going to cost approx half the value of the car to fix. I guess the only way anyone will ever pay attention to this matter is after it causes someone's death. Its nice to see that so far on just one site there are almost a 1000 cougars that have had this problem already. I guess I'll just call the NHTSA like everyone else has thats had this problem. Thanks a million for the service.
Rich

----- Original message -----
From: crcmerc@ford.com

> Dear [REDACTED]

>
> Thank you for contacting the Ford Motor Company Customer Relationship Center
> with the additional information we requested.
>
> We have reviewed your situation and unfortunately, there are no warranties, recalls or customer satisfaction programs on your vehicle that would provide assistance for this repair.
>
> If you have any other inquiries or concerns, please feel free to contact us and we will be happy to address them for you.
>
> Sincerely,
> Alice
> Customer Relationship Center
> Ford Motor Company
>
>
>
> [THREAD ID:1-2UJCL3]
>
>
>
> -----Original Message-----
>
> From: lmjyp24@comcast.net

> Sent: 4/14/2006 11:20:50 AM
> To: crcmerc@ford.com
> Subject: Re: Ford Motor Company
>
>
> Hello. Thank you for getting back to me so quickly. Here is the information you requested.
>
> Home Phone Number: [REDACTED]
>
> Vehicle Identification Number: 1ZWFT61L [REDACTED]
>
> Odometer Reading: 80353
>
> Servicing Dealership:
> COLUMBIANA FORD-MERCURY, INC
> 14851 SOUTH AVE.
> COLUMBIANA, OHIO 44408
> 330 482 3831
> Bought new from Mike DeMarco
>
>
> ----- Original message -----
> From: crcmerc@ford.com
>
> > Dear [REDACTED]
> >
> > Thank you for contacting the Ford Motor Company Customer Relationship Center

> > regarding the sunroof concern you are having with your 2000 Mercury Cougar.

> >

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> 1-800-392-3673

> > between the hours of 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday. Hearing
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> > Vehicle Identification Number:

> > Odometer Reading:!

>

> &g

> t; Servicing Dealership:

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> > We consider the satisfaction of our customers one of our most
important

> > objectives. If you have any other inquiries or concerns, please feel
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> > contact us and we will be happy to address them for you.

> >!

&g

t; > Sincerely,

> > Alice

> > Customer Relationship Center

> > Ford Motor Company

> >

> >

> >

> >

> >

> > [THREAD ID:1-2UJCL3]

> >

> >

> >

> > -----Original Message-----

> >

> > From: LMLYP24@comcast.net

> > Sent: 4/13/2006 07:51:28 PM

> > To:

> > Cc:

> > Subject: AskKate2000 / Mercury / Cougar Vehicle Problems

> >

> > Kana Escalation EmailTitle: Mr.

> > First Name: [REDACTED]

> > Last Name: [REDACTED]

> > Address: [REDACTED]

> > City: Lexington

> > State: OH

> > ZIP: [REDACTED]

> > Email Address: [REDACTED]

> > Vehicle Owner: Yes

> > Telephone Number:

> [REDACTED]

> [REDACTED]

> >

> > Model Year: 2000

> > Brand: Mercury

> > Model

> el: Cou

>

> > VIN Number:

> > Mileage: 80,000

> >

> > Category of Query/Concern: Vehicle Problems

> > Description of Issue/Concern: Hello,

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> 2001

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> > there is any way to get help paying for this repair.!

Thanks

, Rich

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