CL-10409490-1690

SEP - 1 2011

August 31, 2011

FAX ONLY
(202) 366-7882
(202) 366-3081

MR FRANK BORRIS
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION
U S DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADM
1200 NEW JERSEY AVE SE WEST BLDG
WASHINGTON DC 20590

RE: FORD E-150 VAN WAGONS (2008-2011)
2011 E-150 CLUB VAN XL PASSENGER WAGON WITH TOWING PACKAGE
VIN #1FMNE1BW1BD[redacted]

SUBJECT: TSB REPORT OF APRIL 1, 2010, NHTSA REF. 10032624, TSB 09-20-07 WANDERING

Dear Mr. Borris:

Enclosed you will find two faxes that I directed to Downtown Ford dated August 29 and August 30. In my fax of August 30 I included the weather reports and a spreadsheet.

I have a taped conversation with Ford engineer Michyna, which I can convert to written text. This conversation occurred on August 26. We chatted for about 30-45 minutes. In this conversation Mr. Michyna admitted he made the wrong diagnosis and prescribed the wrong adjustments. This is on NHTSA Reference 10032624 and TSB 09-20-7. I had mentioned to you before that "wandering" is being misdiagnosed as free play in the steering wheel but that is not the case. It is a suspension problem and engineers and technicians are recommending the wrong adjustments that actually increase the probability of an accident.

When the E-150's hit 50 mph it reaches the limit that the suspension can hold the body over the top of the wheelbase frame. Events #6 and #7 were near fatal accidents by the same consumer. It is remarkable as to the same patterns that are revealed. The E-150's cannot be controlled at 60-70 mph in winds from 5-10 mph and wind gusts between 8 and 26 mph.

As I mentioned before, the driver sitting in the body of the van thinks that the van is headed either into the ditch or toward the center line when it only the body that's moving and the wheelbase tracks true. The driver is tricked into thinking that the van is either headed toward the ditch or into the other lane of oncoming traffic and then tries to adjust by yanking the steering wheel in the opposite direction.

When one initially encounters constant wind gusts, since the driver does not know what is really causing the "wandering", it becomes a constant back and forth battle with the steering

August 31, 2011
Mr. Frank Borris

wheel when there is nothing wrong with the steering at all -- it is the back and forth movement of the body that the driver reacts to because of an insufficient suspension that cannot hold the body directly above the wheelbase.

There were engineering changes with an undersized anti-sway bar changed to a tab and link attachment which is inferior to directly bolting the anti-sway bar to the frame. Further, the sway bar is not of tempered steel and is undersized.

I purchased this van with a towing package and therefore no body roll should be experienced whatsoever. I pull a trailer that is 30 feet long with a boat on top with an extremely wide wheelbase. There is no margin for error and if the driver is fighting the steering wheel back and forth then the boat is going to whip around into a ditch or into oncoming traffic. The body roll is extremely dangerous at 70 mph; however, that's the speed limit. I have a 2005, E-150 in my possession that does not experience body roll at all.

Five suspension specialists and a Ford certified engineer all indicated that the suspension could not handle the wind resistance when wind is hitting the body of the van at the higher mph's. On June 18 I could have experienced a likewise fatal accident had I not traveled to Scottsville KY knowing that there were control problems which increased my awareness.

Previously I sent you a number of complaints by E-150 RV Platform owners as well as confirmation that a Ford Motor Co. engineer from Cincinnati admits that he did not diagnose the problem correctly.

Any help along these lines would be sincerely appreciated.

[redacted]

Louisville KY [redacted]

cc: **FAX ONLY**
(937) 666-3590
MR ROGER SAUL
VEHICLE RESEARCH & TEST CENTER
U S DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION

FAX ONLY
(202) 366-1767
MR RANDY REED

August 30, 2011

FAX ONLY
584-2278

MS VIRGINIA PAYNE – PARTS & SVC DIR
DOWNTOWN FORD
809 S 5TH ST
LOUISVILLE KY 40203

FAXED

RE: 2011 ECONOLINE FORD CLUB VAN WAGON
VIN# 1FMNE1BW1BD[redacted]
WITH TOWING PACKAGE

Dear Virginia:

Please see the Wind Resistance Chart and explanation attached. It is more than a coincidence that the 2011 E-150 Van Wagon that I purchased cannot handle wind resistance as shown. My 2005 E-150 Van Wagon has never had any type of problem under the same conditions.

A consumer in Atlanta with the 2010 Van Wagon XLT experienced two near fatal accidents. It is not a coincidence that all of the conditions are the same. The suspension is inadequate and cannot handle typical wind resistance when the E-150's approach 50 mph. We avoided accidents the entire time traveling down Interstate I-65 at 1:00 p.m. on June 18, 2011. On the return trip that night the winds were calm, there was no wind speed at all, speed was reduced to 60 mph and body roll had subsided substantially.

Virginia, sooner or later there is going to be a death or several deaths because a driver does not know what they are experiencing and they do not know how to react. Traveling down to Scottsville on June 18, I suspected problems but I had not yet identified the problem. We were overly cautious. Another driver, where their awareness was not raised would have been involved in an accident. There is no question about it. My son [redacted] is a very good driver and Event #4 would have probably been handled differently by someone else and ended up in a ditch.

I went to the five top suspension experts in the United States and one of the brightest Ford Certified mechanics in the country. They all came to the same conclusion – the suspension cannot handle the body roll that is created when mph speed exceeds 50 mph. As to all of the events described in the attached Wind Resistant Chart, the suspension should be strong enough to keep the body over the top of the wheelbase. All of the experts indicated that the sway bar was undersized, which was the reason for the left to right shift and that a sway bar is necessary in the front and also perhaps stabilizers. The link and tab system connecting the undersized sway bar, by design, is weaker than a sway bar attaching directly to the frame.

August 30, 2011
Ms. Virginia Payne

Also, the rubber bushings have to be perfect and not cracked, as what has been experienced on one of the shock absorber bushings.

Mr. Michyna admitted he misdiagnosed the problem and had you adjust the steering gear mesh, which in reality created a more dangerous situation – more play and less control of steering. This is the same adjustment recommended for the 2010 year models that experienced "wandering".

Mr. Michyna diagnosed the problem incorrectly and he is an engineer. This means the 2010 Technical TSB 09-20-7 and NHTSA Ref. 10032624 Service Bulletin is incorrect, as the real problem is body roll created from inadequate suspension that cannot handle wind resistance.

Everyone at Downtown Ford experienced the same body roll that I did; otherwise, engineer Michyna would not have been called in and your request. Bear in mind that Mr. Michyna's position is that the body roll behavior that I described is indicative of all 2011 E-150 vans but apparently not to a level that Mr. Michyna believes to be unsafe, yet Mr. Michyna is not a suspension specialist by his own admission and; therefore, he agrees that he is not in a position to make correct deductions.

My van was ordered with a "towing" package and; therefore, should have included whatever suspension package was necessary to eliminate all characteristics of body roll. There can be no margin of error pulling a 30 ft. trailer with a very wide wheelbase.

Virginia, if you contact me or communicate to me that "the van is ready" and subsequently something occurs, whether it is someone else driving this van or me, then you realize you will be held liable as would Downtown Ford. Also, there is a duty for you to be a consumer advocate when it comes to safety compromise due to manufacturer engineering deficiencies. A lot of defects are not safety-related but this is the type of defect that almost resulted in a fatality in the Dothan GA area. Further, there have been incorrect diagnoses of "wandering" where the steering mesh gear adjustment has nothing to do with the proper fix.

I appreciate your continued persistence in making sure that you arrive at a solution to direct the deficiencies in my 2011 E-150 Van.

[redacted]d have a good day.

[redacted]
Louisville KY
[redacted]

WIND RESISTANCE CHART

EVENT #	DATE	TIME	MPH	TRAVEL DIRECTION	DIR WIND	WIND MPH	BODY ROLL
1	~	~	40	~	~	~	0
2	~	~	40	RAMP	~	0	L
3	~	~	50	RAMP	~	5	M
4	5/6/2011	8:00 PM	60	S & N	WSW	8	H
5	6/16/2011	1:00 PM	70	S	W	9	H
6	5/4/2010	4:00 PM	70	S	NW	7	H
7	10/15/2010	3:19 PM	70	S	W	10	H
8	6/18/2011	11:50 PM	60	N	CALM	0	L

- Mileage – Present mileage of 2011 Van Wagon – 1,000 miles. 400 highway/interstate, 600 in-town miles.
- Body Roll – The numeral 0 (zero), the L (Low), M (MEDIUM), H (High) very dangerous.
- Body Roll Defined – The sensation of the top portion of the van above the frame and wheelbase where wind moves the van body in a direction while the wheelbase tracks true. The suspension between the wheelbase and the body is incapable of keeping the body in place directly over the wheelbase. The suspension cannot deflect the wind without the top body portion moving. The driver panics thinking the vehicle is going in a ditch and jerks the steering wheel in the opposite direction causing over-steer creating a condition that will cause tumbling and capsizing at a high rate of speed.
- Even #1 – Describes in-town driving which encompasses 600 of the 1000 miles on the van.
- Event #2 – Describes slight body roll on the on/off interstate ramp at 40 mph.
- Event #3 – Describes increased body roll when merging into traffic from an off/on ramp.
- Event #4 – This is when the van had less than 100 miles on it. My son, [redacted] traveled on a road next to the Ohio River where wind speed and small wind gusts would be greater than in urban driving. There is a constant struggle fighting body roll as he did not know what he was experiencing and thought it was alignment or "wandering" being caused by steering which turned out not to be the case. Wind speed varied between 8 and 12 mph with possible light gusts.

- Event #5 – This was the trip down to Scottsville where my wife started out and was afraid to drive. My wife panicked when 18-wheelers would pass. She started crying, pulled the van over and indicated she would never drive it again. Wind gusts were between 8 and 18 mph. I took over and during the entire trip for close to two hours it was a constant struggle and a constant adjustment of the steering wheel because I thought we were headed for a ditch. Body roll was constant but worse when the wind would gust. Also, when 18-wheelers would pass, it likewise created a burst of wind that would rock the van body.
- Event #6 – This was a near death experience by a consumer owning a 2010 XLT Van. This experience is described in the attached as a near fatal incident. Wind gusts were between 8 and 16 mph with an average wind speed of 7 mph.
- Event #7 – The same consumer five months later had another near fatal accident when the average wind speed was about 10 mph and wind gusts between 15 and 26 mph.
- Event #8 – Describes the return trip back from Scottsville where there was only slight body roll. Wind was calm, no gusts and zero mph wind speed. Travel speed was reduced from 70 mph to 60 mph. Body roll was substantially reduced.

safercar.gov

Complaints - Search Results

2 Record(s) Displayed.

Report Date : June 20, 2011 at *10:18 PM*
Search Type : VEHICLE
Year : 2010
Make : FORD
Model : E-150

Make : FORD **Model :** E-150 **Year :** 2010
Manufacturer : FORD MOTOR COMPANY
Crash : No **Fire :** No **Number of Injuries:** 0
ODI ID Number : 10375895 **Number of Deaths:** 0
Date of Failure: May 4, 2010
VIN : Not Available
Component: STEERING
Summary:
12/1/2010 EXPLANATION OF TWO LIFE THREATENING SITUATIONS SITUATION ONE: ON MAY 4, 2010, I THE CONSUMER, WAS DRIVING FROM JOHNS CREEK, GEORGIA TO CHATTANOOGA, TENN. THE TRIP WAS ON GEORGIA HWY 400 SOUTH FROM OLD MILTON PKWY TO I-285 WEST AND NORTH ON I-75. THE TIME WAS BETWEEN 3:30 PM AND 5:30PM. THE VAN WAS DIFFICULT TO CONTROL AND WAS MOVING FROM THE LEFT TO THE RIGHT SIDES OF THE TRAFFIC LANE. THE TRAFFIC WAS CONSIDERED NORMAL FOR I-75 WITH 18 WHEEL TRUCK AND PASSENGER CAR TRAFFIC. THE VAN WAS DRIVEN WITH THE FLOW OF TRAFFIC APPROXIMATELY BETWEEN 65 AND 75 MPH. IN THE DALTON, GEORGIA AREA OF I-75 THE VAN WAS APPROACHING AN OVERPASS. AT THE OVERPASS THE PAVEMENT MUST HAVE CHANGED IN LEVEL BECAUSE THE VAN JUMPED IN THE AIR AND TURNED SLIGHTLY TO THE LEFT APPROACHING THE LEFT GUARD RAIL. FORTUNATELY, THE CONSUMER DRIVER WAS ABLE TO REGAIN CONTROL BEFORE HITTING THE GUARD RAIL OR THE TRUCK ON THE RIGHT. THE VAN WAS RETURNED TO CHEROKEE FORD ON MAY 5, 2010 FOR CORRECTION OF THE DIFFICULT CONTROL PROBLEM. THE PROBLEM HAS NOT BEEN REPAIRED TO DATE. SITUATION TWO: ON OCTOBER 15, 2010 I THE CONSUMER, WAS DRIVING SOUTH ON GEORGIA HWY 400 FROM OLD MILTON PKWY TO THE ABERNATHY EXIT. THE TIME WAS BETWEEN 2:30PM TO 2:45PM. TRAFFIC WAS HEAVY WITH PASSENGER CAR TRAFFIC AND THE VAN WAS TRAVELING IN THE MIDDLE LEFT LANE OF THE FOUR LANE HIGHWAY. TRAFFIC SPEED WAS NORMAL FOR GEORGIA 400 ABOUT 65 TO 75 MPH. THE VAN WAS DIFFICULT TO CONTROL AND WAS MOVING FROM THE LEFT TO THE RIGHT SIDES OF THE TRAFFIC LANE, SIMILAR WITH SITUATION ONE. FOR NO APPARENT REASON AND WITH NO CHANGE IN THE STEERING WHEEL DIRECTION THE VAN WENT LEFT INTO THE FAR LEFT LANE. I TRIED TO RETURN TO THE MIDDLE LEFT LANE, BUT THE VAN WOULD NOT RESPOND WITH A SLIGHT TURN TO THE RIGHT. AFTER SOME DISTANCE, UNKNOWN, THE VAN DID RESPOND AND RETURNED TO THE MIDDLE LEFT LANE.

Make : FORD **Model :** E-150 **Year :** 2010
Manufacturer : FORD MOTOR COMPANY
Crash : No **Fire :** No **Number of Injuries:** 0
ODI ID Number : 10375895 **Number of Deaths:** 0
Date of Failure: May 4, 2010
VIN : Not Available
Component: STEERING:WHEEL AND HANDLE BAR
Summary:
12/1/2010 EXPLANATION OF TWO LIFE THREATENING SITUATIONS SITUATION ONE: ON MAY 4, 2010, I THE CONSUMER, WAS DRIVING FROM JOHNS CREEK, GEORGIA TO CHATTANOOGA, TENN. THE TRIP WAS ON GEORGIA HWY 400 SOUTH FROM OLD MILTON PKWY TO I-285 WEST AND NORTH ON I-75. THE TIME WAS BETWEEN 3:30 PM AND 5:30PM. THE VAN WAS DIFFICULT TO CONTROL AND WAS MOVING FROM THE LEFT TO THE RIGHT SIDES OF THE TRAFFIC LANE. THE TRAFFIC WAS CONSIDERED NORMAL

FAXED

August 29, 2011

FAX ONLY
584-2278

MS VIRGINIA PAYNE – PARTS & SVC DIR
DOWNTOWN FORD
809 S 5TH ST
LOUISVILLE KY 40203

RE: 2011 ECONOLINE FORD CLUB VAN WAGON
VIN# 1FMNE1BW1BD[redacted]
WITH TOWING PACKAGE

Dear Virginia:

Mr. Michyna phoned me on the afternoon of August 26 at approximately 4:00 p.m. We had a nice conversation and I appreciated his call.

The highlights of our discussion were as follows;

- Mr. Michyna confirmed he was called in at the request of Downtown Ford to deal with vehicle control problems confirmed by you, your technicians and your shop foreman.
- Admitted that his diagnosis and adjustment made to the alignment and steering mesh gear was incorrect. It was unknown to me that these adjustments were re-set to factory specifications.
- Confirmed lack of expertise and background knowledge to confirm that the suspension components were not adequate enough to handle wind resistance that created body roll at speeds in excess of 50 mph.
- Said it was unlikely that Ford would send a suspension specialist to confirm body roll.
- Agreed it could not be ruled out that the sway bar design change of tabs and links coupled with other changes raising the body off the ground are factors that could create the body roll I was describing.
- Agreed up and down movement of sway bar was not unusual but that the left and right movement of the sway bar causing metal to metal contact was not normal.
- Indicated all E-150's exhibited some type of what I describe as body roll and therefore concluded Ford would not purposely design a vehicle that was defective which I would expect anyone to say that receives a paycheck from Ford.
- Was alarmed that Mr. Michyna would state that with a towing package and that the level of safety that I was expecting when towing my boat, which was within weight specifications of the towing package, "that the 2011 van that I purchased was not the right vehicle to suit my needs".

I thought the statement above was quite alarming in that all prior purchases of E-150 vans during the last thirty years have suited my towing needs as I have been towing a boat for that long. I have had the same boat since 1989. My driving habits have been the same to where I have safely towed my boat at the upper speed limits posted on interstate highways and on state roads.

- Mr. Michyna agreed that my family and I have probably more driving experience of E-150 Ford Van Wagons than anyone in the world.

Mr. Michyna was curious about my background knowledge and I told him when I experience a problem I consult with experts – that it is not that hard to do. He wondered who the Ford Certified Technician was that provided the body roll opinion that I have advanced as if no one receiving a paycheck from Ford should dare make such a statement. I did state that the Ford technician was no longer employed at Ford; however, the same technician has serviced my E-150 2005 van since it was purchased and during the time that this mechanic was Ford certified.

Mr. Michyna seemed to lack focus on the van that I purchased with a towing package to where no body roll characteristics can be exhibited whatsoever when towing. Mr. Michyna had no explanation for and failed to address the cracked shock absorber bushing. Suspension bushings including the shock absorber bushing are essential in preventing suspension body roll. Mr. Michyna admitted that the cracked shock absorber bushing existed but did not have the expertise to address same or the consequences thereof.

When I ordered the 2011 van with the towing package I asked Mr. Michyna why wasn't a heavy duty anti-sway bar and stabilizers added to insure a high degree of safe towing, which should come with the purchase of a towing package. Mr. Michyna did not have an answer for that, which I find quite puzzling.

The bottom line is that the E-150 2005 van that I currently have has an adequate suspension setup to deflect wind resistance at higher speed limit up to 75 mph that works safely in combination with the towing package. The E-150, 2011 has a much lower threshold of when wind resistance starts to create body roll which happens when speeds approach 50 mph. That's when the suspension limits max out on the 2011 model. It becomes progressively worse as limits increase to a dangerous level as one approaches 70-75 mph. The combination of any wind speeds greater than 5 mph also contributes significantly to body roll that can be detected starting at 45 mph. When you have the combination of all of the above plus an 18-wheeler passing by that creates additional wind, the body roll becomes fatally dangerous.

The changes in the suspension with the 2011 model and probably 2010 models and maybe even before in which engineering changes with springs and undersized sway bars, and the tab and link design in which the sway bar was attached added additional suspension strain and

August 29, 2011
Ms. Virginia Payne

accordingly suspension adjustments were not made commensurate to the other changes and; therefore, cannot handle wind resistance beyond 50 mph.

What is likewise troubling are the many consumer reports about "wandering" on the 2010 model year that have been incorrectly diagnosed as exemplified by Mr. Michyna's mistake in which "wandering" is caused by suspension defects and not steering gear mesh and tire alignment deficiencies.

I assume you will continue to work very hard toward a resolution.

Thanks for your time and efforts on this matter.

[redacted]
Louisville KY
[redacted]

August 23, 2011

FAX ONLY
(202) 366-7882
(202) 366-3081

MR FRANK BORRIS
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION
U S DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADM
1200 NEW JERSEY AVE SE WEST BLDG
WASHINGTON DC 20590

RE: FORD E-150 VAN WAGONS (2008-2011)
2011 E-150 CLUB VAN XL PASSENGER WAGON WITH TOWING PACKAGE
VIN #1FMNE1BW1BD[redacted]

SUBJECT: TSB REPORT OF APRIL 1, 2010, NHTSA REF. 10032624, TSB 09-20-07 WANDERING

Dear Mr. Borris:

Received the attached fax from Downtown Ford dated August 22. Please observe that Ford refuses to meet with me with a Ford Engineer Suspension Specialist being present. This is after field engineer Mr. Michyna confirmed body roll that is indicative of all E-150 platforms. Mr. Michyna made the wrong diagnosis and started tinkering with the steering gear mesh box potentially creating a more dangerous situation.

I paid $32,000.00 for my 2011 E-150 XL Van with towing package and limited slip differential. It doesn't matter that there have been two near death experiences and about five or six accidents that I avoided while driving. That, together with the complaints by the RV users of the E-150 platforms and the wandering complaints that were the result of body roll and not steering, certainly has to be enough for an NHTSA investigation. The body roll is easy enough to simulate by taking out any E-150, including a cargo van and taking the vehicle up to 70 mph and then manipulating the steering wheel. The suspension is not strong enough to keep the body in place. I am not sure if I forwarded to you my faxes to Ms. Payne dated August 18, August 12 and August 11 so; therefore, copies of same are enclosed.

The cover-up and denial continues. Please observe that Ms. Payne has not addressed the rear sway bar that has shifted to the right causing metal to metal contact or the cracked shock absorber bushing probably made of the same rubber as all the other bushings. Either the body roll caused the bushing to crack because the shock could not handle the body roll or it is defective rubber in which case all of the bushings should be replaced.

August 23, 2011
Mr. Frank Borris

Please observe that she admits to correcting the leaking axle fluid but refuses to address the body control issues, the cracked shock absorber bushing and she has no intentions of retracting her statement that left to right shift of the rear sway bar is considered normal.

Yours truly,

[redacted]
Louisville KY
[redacted]

cc: **FAX ONLY**
(937) 666-3590
MR ROGER SAUL
VEHICLE RESEARCH & TEST CENTER
U S DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION

FAX ONLY
(202) 366-1767
MR RANDY REED

DOWNTOWN Ford INC.

809 South Fifth Street - Louisville, KY 40203
Telephone (502) 584-9731

August 22, 2011

[redacted]
Louisville, Kentucky [redacted]

RE: 2011 Ford Econoline Van- 1FMNE1BW1BD[redacted]
[redacted]

I do not have direct access to a Ford Engineer Suspension Specialist. The only engineer I have access to is my field service engineer, James Michyna. I have forward all your faxes to him and Ms. Shanna Santiago.

The left rear axle seal leak has been repaired. At this time there will not be any further repairs performed on your vehicle. A request was made to have you drive with a Ford representative to demonstrate your concern and to my understanding you have declined. Please look at your schedule and let us know a date and time which you would be willing to meet with Mr. Michyna. Your vehicle is ready for immediate pick up. Pending the outcome of your meeting with Mr. Michyna, further repairs may be scheduled at that time.

Thank You,

Virginia Payne

Virginia Payne
Parts & Service Director
Downtown Ford, Inc.
(502) 584-9731

August 18, 2011

FAX ONLY
584-2278

FAXED

MS VIRGINIA PAYNE – PARTS & SVC DIR
DOWNTOWN FORD
809 S 5TH ST
LOUISVILLE KY 40203

RE: 2011 ECONOLINE FORD CLUB VAN WAGON
VIN# 1FMNE1BW1BD[redacted]
WITH TOWING PACKAGE

Dear Virginia:

When I returned my van to you the rear sway bar had shifted to the right causing metal to metal contact. Also, the shock absorber bushing is cracked. Both of these issues are very uncharacteristic of a brand new van with less than 1,000 miles. Every one of the 1,000 miles was on perfectly good highways and there were no hazards or anything hit such as holes, etc.

Five experts, including a Ford certified technician, three technical consultants and one suspension engineer confirmed that the sway bar shifted to the right because it is inadequate to handle the body roll, aka sway, aka body wandering. The specialists state that the body roll is not conducive to safe towing.

I bought a towing package and accordingly, if changes were made in the van placing additional stress on the suspension that cannot hold the body over the top of the frame then heavy duty sway bars both front and back should have been attached to the frame. In addition, bushings play an integral role in controlling body roll; consequently, we need to know what caused the crack at the crucial point where the shock absorber is attached to the body and the frame. I presented three different reasonable options.

I am particularly troubled that you mentioned that sway bar movement to the right and left, which is known in the industry as "walking", is acceptable whereas all the experts state that this is a dangerous body roll condition to where the sway bar shifted because it was inadequate to hold the body in place over the frame platform. In light of the great service over the years from Downtown Ford, this troubles me greatly. In addition, the Ford engineer who receives a paycheck from Ford contends the inherent condition in all E-150's that is experienced after 50 mph is acceptable to Ford but it is not acceptable to me because my van has a cracked bushing and a sway bar that shifted to the right causing metal to metal contact. Whatever caused this is not conducive to safe driving as anti-way bars are not supposed to move left to right.

August 18, 2011
Ms. Virginia Payne

Finally, because the engineer had no solution to the problem, he guessed as to a steering wheel adjustment. The steering gear mesh adjustment screw either increases or decreases play in the steering wheel and has nothing to do with "body roll".

Downtown Ford and Ford Motor Company need to make some decisions. The van has been in and out of your shop for close to 1 ½ months. Body roll starts at approximately 45 mph on curves, 50 mph on straight highways and increases in severity as mph increases up to and beyond 70 mph. After 50 mph insignificant wind speeds between 5-15 mph contribute to body roll.

Glad your efforts eliminated the steering gear box as a possible cause of the control problem which turned out to be body roll. Your engineer wanted to take me for rides in other E-150's to demonstrate that body roll is inherent to all E-150's; however, mine has a towing package to where no body roll can occur at posted interstate speed limits of 70 and 80 mph. You also have to factor in moderate wind speeds and wind gusts that this E-150 should be able to deflect the wind without body roll being created. To this day, I can take my 2005 E-150 up to 80 mph and no body roll is experienced.

I have been deprived of safe use of my van at interstate speeds since it was purchased. Ford's published materials state that the van cannot produce conditions that affect what you tow.

I have presented several reasonable options. I would appreciate the professional courtesy of a response. I am also paying insurance premiums on a van that is unsafe to drive at interstate speed limits.

[redacted]
Louisville KY [redacted]

August 12, 2011

FAX ONLY
584-2278

MS VIRGINIA PAYNE – PARTS & SVC DIR
DOWNTOWN FORD
809 S 5TH ST
LOUISVILLE KY 40203

FAXED

RE: 2011 ECONOLINE FORD CLUB VAN WAGON
VIN# 1FMNE1BW1BD[redacted]
WITH TOWING PACKAGE

Dear Virginia:

REAR SWAY BAR
I have had five experts state that the sway bar shifted to the right because it is undersized and designed incorrectly and therefore defective. I am told an EOM replacement will not resolve the problem. Please have a Ford Engineer Suspension Specialist contact me.

CRACKED SHOCK ABSORBER
I have had five experts state that any one of the following could apply:

- defective rubber
- rubber that can not handle the body's shift like forces
- the shock absorber can not handle the body roll causing abnormal impact, thus a crack

Please have a Ford Engineer Specialist contact me.

The experts say shift of sway bar from left to right is very dangerous. This is known by the experts as "walking", "bar walk". Up and down rotation of an anti sway bar is normal; however, left to right shift can cause a fatal accident.

You told me that a rear sway bar shift to the right causing metal to metal contact is normal.

Thanks for your cooperation. I look forward to your reply.

[redacted]
Louisville, KY
[redacted]

August 11, 2011

FAX ONLY
584-2278

MS VIRGINIA PAYNE – PARTS & SVC DIR
DOWNTOWN FORD
809 S 5TH ST
LOUISVILLE KY 40203

FAXED

RE: 2011 ECONOLINE FORD CLUB VAN WAGON
VIN# 1FMNE1BW1BD[redacted]
WITH TOWING PACKAGE

Dear Virginia:

When your customer rep, Ms. Santiago called me on August 10, she insinuated there was a "communication problem" between me and Downtown Ford. What she was referring to is the wrong diagnosis made by James Michnya.

It was perceived that what I encountered when driving the van was "steering control wandering". Unknown to me at the time, I did not know what I was experiencing but now we have total clarity. What I had experienced was "body roll wandering" for lack of any other better terminology.

At 70 mph the suspension for the van and especially what holds the body of the van in place directly over the frame could not handle wind pressure against the van. That's why as the mph increases over 50 mph the body roll increases proportionately to a dangerous level. The defects here are that the wind pressure forces are greater than what the body of the van is supposed to deflect, which is crucially dependent upon how the suspension works between the body of the van and the frame of the van.

At speeds of 50 mph or more and with additional wind speed as displayed in the weather statistics that I provided you, the body of the van moves but the frame says put and tracks correctly. Because the driver's seat is in the body of the van the driver's natural reaction is to jerk the steering wheel in the opposite direction of the sway (aka body roll aka body roll wander) when in reality the frame is tracking correctly.

The best course would be for the driver to make no steering corrections and wait for the body to return to its proper position above the frame.

I was trying to counter the body roll and sway that I was encountering and I would instinctively turn the steering wheel in the opposite direction to counter the body roll that I was experiencing.

August 11, 2011
Ms. Virginia Payne

When I brought the van back to Downtown Ford for repairs, I mentioned that every time I adjusted the steering the wheel, I experienced sway. In reality, the sway was not being caused by the steering wheel but it was being caused by the van body movement created by wind.

Your engineer misdiagnosed the problem. I relayed exactly what was happening but it was due to wind causing body roll and not because of a tight steering wheel. The steering wheel mesh box should have been left alone and the focus should have been on body roll.

I described to you exactly what was occurring; however, the wrong diagnosis meant the wrong adjustment. The mesh gear was loosened and created an extreme amount of free play in the steering wheel. Potentially, this is a correction that is likely to have fatal consequences.

When you, your shop foreman and the engineer test drove other E-150 vans, you confirmed the existence of body roll at speeds in excess of 50 mph. It was described as "the same behavior" as my E-150 van.

Now, it seems there is an effort by Mr. Michnya to rationalize that the body roll is okay because what was misinterpreted as wandering caused by the steering wheel is actually wandering caused by body roll.

Granted, you have eliminated the issue of steering wheel wandering because in reality that never was the problem to begin with.

Now, what's going to happen to someone driving an E-150 at speeds greater than 50 mph is that the driver is going to jerk the steering wheel in the opposite direction of the sway and the result will be over-steer causing the top heavy van to capsize where the entire van will roll over down the highway or in a ditch.

Please let Ms. Santiago know that we are now all on the same page.

[redacted] consideration and cooperation on this matter.

[redacted]
Louisville KY
[redacted]

AUG 31 2011

August 23, 2011

FAX ONLY
(202) 366-7882
(202) 366-3081

MR FRANK BORRIS
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION
U S DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADM
1200 NEW JERSEY AVE SE WEST BLDG
WASHINGTON DC 20590

RE: FORD E-150 VAN WAGONS (2008-2011)
2011 E-150 CLUB VAN XL PASSENGER WAGON WITH TOWING PACKAGE
VIN #1FMNE1BW1BD[redacted]

SUBJECT: TSB REPORT OF APRIL 1, 2010, NHTSA REF. 10032624, TSB 09-20-07 WANDERING

Dear Mr. Borris:

Received the attached fax from Downtown Ford dated August 22. Please observe that Ford refuses to meet with me with a Ford Engineer Suspension Specialist being present. This is after field engineer Mr. Michyna confirmed body roll that is indicative of all E-150 platforms. Mr. Michyna made the wrong diagnosis and started tinkering with the steering gear mesh box potentially creating a more dangerous situation.

I paid $32,000.00 for my 2011 E-150 XL Van with towing package and limited slip differential. It doesn't matter that there have been two near death experiences and about five or six accidents that I avoided while driving. That, together with the complaints by the RV users of the E-150 platforms and the wandering complaints that were the result of body roll and not steering, certainly has to be enough for an NHTSA investigation. The body roll is easy enough to simulate by taking out any E-150, including a cargo van and taking the vehicle up to 70 mph and then manipulating the steering wheel. The suspension is not strong enough to keep the body in place. I am not sure if I forwarded to you my faxes to Ms. Payne dated August 18, August 12 and August 11 so; therefore, copies of same are enclosed.

The cover-up and denial continues. Please observe that Ms. Payne has not addressed the rear sway bar that has shifted to the right causing metal to metal contact or the cracked shock absorber bushing probably made of the same rubber as all the other bushings. Either the body roll caused the bushing to crack because the shock could not handle the body roll or it is defective rubber in which case all of the bushings should be replaced.

August 23, 2011
Mr. Frank Borris

Please observe that she admits to correcting the leaking axle fluid but refuses to address the body control issues, the cracked shock absorber bushing and she has no intentions of retracting her statement that left to right shift of the rear sway bar is considered normal.

Yours truly,

[redacted]
Louisville KY [redacted]
[redacted]

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(202) 366-1767
MR RANDY REED

DOWNTOWN Ford INC.

809 South Fifth Street - Louisville, KY 40203
Telephone (502) 584-9731

August 22, 2011

[redacted]

Louisville, Kentucky [redacted]

RE: 2011 Ford Econoline Van- 1FMNE1BW1BD[redacted]

[redacted]

I do not have direct access to a Ford Engineer Suspension Specialist. The only engineer I have access to is my field service engineer, James Michyna. I have forward all your faxes to him and Ms. Shanna Santiago.

The left rear axle seal leak has been repaired. At this time there will not be any further repairs performed on your vehicle. A request was made to have you drive with a Ford representative to demonstrate your concern and to my understanding you have declined. Please look at your schedule and let us know a date and time which you would be willing to meet with Mr. Michyna. Your vehicle is ready for immediate pick up. Pending the outcome of your meeting with Mr. Michyna, further repairs may be scheduled at that time.

Thank You,

Virginia Payne

Virginia Payne
Parts & Service Director
Downtown Ford, Inc.
(502) 584-9731

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August 22, 2011

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RE: FORD E-150 VAN WAGONS (2008-2011)
2011 E-150 CLUB VAN XL PASSENGER WAGON WITH TOWING PACKAGE
VIN #1FMNE1BW1BD[redacted]

SUBJECT: TSB REPORT OF APRIL 1, 2010, NHTSA REF. 10032624, TSB 09-20-07 WANDERING

Dear Mr. Borris:

Steering wandering does not occur in new vehicles. Steering wandering and body wandering are completely different and the consumer that reports "wandering" isn't going to know the difference.

These complaints are about new vehicles and new E-150's. Because of the severity of body roll, consumers perceive this as a steering problem when it is not. It is a body roll problem.

The suspension between the body and the frame wheel base is weak and cannot deflect the wind when the vehicle approaches 50 mph. When the body sways in one direction, the driver has the tendency to jerk the wheel in the opposite direction causing over-steer and creating more of a problem causing the van to tumble over.

The steering gear box adjustment is set at the factory and should not be tampered with unless the van is completely worn out and has a couple hundred thousand miles on it and the suspension is completely shot. That's because of excessive play in the wheel and you can use the adjustment screw to tighten up the excessive play. This should never be the correction for newer E-150's.

Based on the information I sent you, the Ford Engineer James Michnya admits body roll behavior characteristics in all E-150 wheelbase platforms. It is especially common when these platforms are used by RV manufacturers. Please see the attached email strings. My vehicle has a towing package whereby there can be no body roll whatsoever especially when towing at the interstate speed limits of 70-80 mph. Anything towed behind my van, if there is any body roll whatsoever, would be slung around like "crack the whip".

When you consider every time that I took out my E-150 van and exceeded 50 mph or 45 mph on an on/off ramp, I experienced body roll every time. We had two near accidents and the consumer

August 22, 2011
Mr. Frank Borris

reporting the same problem under identical circumstances had two near fatal accidents with his E-150 XLT 2010 Van Wagon.

The wandering can be simulated in any E-150, even a cargo van by driving 70 mph and then manipulating the steering wheel back and forth.

The suspension is inadequate to hold the body in place over the wheelbase platform. It is not strong enough to deflect the wind at interstate highway speed limits. That's where your dangerous accidents are going to occur and that's what happened to the consumer in the Atlanta GA area. You were also provided with weather reports from Undergroundweather.com to show that winds of between 5 and 15 mph, which is not unusual, also affects body roll in these vans.

I have a 2005 model that I can take up to 90 mph and there is no body roll experience. My sway bar on the 2011 shifted all the way over to the right with metal to metal contact. This shows how weak the suspension really is. Also, after 1,000 miles the shock absorber bushing is not supposed to crack. Either the pressure is too great when the weight shifts as the result of body roll and that's what cracked the bushing or defective rubber in all the suspension bushings.

Also enclosed are the two latest letters directed to my dealership. There has been no response. I have also enclosed some consumer complaints about the E-150 wheelbase used on some RV vehicles.

Thanks for your continued consideration on this matter.

Yours truly,

[redacted]
Louisville KY [redacted]
[redacted]

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MR RANDY REED

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Henry10s**
> *150's steering is busy and sloppy and you have to constantly adjust when driving. Part of it is attributed to sway, and part of the sway is attributed to soft sidewalls of the tires -- jelly feeling....*

E150

can I swap it to another model steering without bigger problems ?

and get rid of that sloppy*%# ---nes ?

I have tried 2 other E-lines but cant recall the model number , do think one was a Inline six E150 , the other a Diesel cargovan could have been a E350

Sincerly

[redacted]

Tires must be Load Rated E, properly inflated. New tires from PW should be E rated unless they were swapped (by dealer?). That is why I suggested to verify.

E150

PW now has a rear sway bar made in Vancouver. It can be retrofitted in older models. I will get one eventually (next year?). I think it is now standard on recent models or it maybe an option. Sway bar will reduce lateral up&down motion induced by sharp turn and road bumps/divots.

E150

A trackbar (aka Panhard rod) is very different than a sway bar (anti-roll bar). It will reduce the left-right action induced by cross-wind & close encounter with "18wheelers".

Johnny

DiscoverThis
Uniontown, OH
USA
Full Member
Joined:
06/16/2004

Posted: 06/21/11 08:27am Link | Quote | Print | Notify Moderator

I can appreciate your frustration. We purchased a new Excel TS in 2008 and spent 3 years trying, unsuccessfully, to solve this problem. The only solution to our problem was to trade it in on a new Roadtrek. Wish I hadn't waited so long.

4

1

E-150

Good Sam RV
Club Member

This, sadly, was the experience of some RV neighbors we met in AZ. I was admiring their PW Excel and then they regaled us with their bad experiences. Their issues were never resolved, either. I think theirs was either a 2007 or 2008 and they were planning to trade it, also.

A year later, though, I met a guy at a fuel station in the NV desert who was also driving a newer PW Excel who was happy with it. And he surely would have experienced wind on that leg of his journey.

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Next

OldLadyDriver
[redacted]
New Member
Joined:
06/20/2011
View Profile

Offline

Posted: 06/20/11 07:23pm Link | Quote | Print | Notify Moderator

We stupidly purchased a 2011 Excel Pleasure Way without doing research ahead of time. In any case we have had it for six months and only driven it twice. One problem after another.
Newest issue is the steering. It is scary to drive the way it sways on the road. Old lady here is the main driver and there is no way I would let my husband drive this van.
It is at the Ford dealer now. At first they told me it was fine. Finally I got a man to go in and drive it with them and finally they admitted there was a problem. I find this vehicle undrivable and unsafe.
Does anyone have a comment on this problem and can it be solved.?

E-150

I will note that PW in Canada has always been nice and responsive when we called them, but I drive this vehicle alone and need to feel safer. Will I?

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August 18, 2011

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RE: FORD E-150 VAN WAGONS (2008-2011)
2011 E-150 CLUB VAN XL PASSENGER WAGON WITH TOWING PACKAGE
VIN #1FMNE1BW1BD[redacted]

Dear Mr. Borris:

You have received several faxes concerning the Ford E-150 Van Wagons (2008-2011). I own a 2011 E-150 Club Van XL Passenger Wagon with towing package identified as VIN #1FMNE1BW1BD[redacted]

As you know, I filed a formal complaint with NHTSA identified as ODI ID10409490. My home mailing address is [redacted] Louisville KY [redacted]. My work phone number is [redacted] I can be reached via cell through my wife's cell phone number of [redacted]

I would like for you to pass this contact information on to the party that registered Complaint No. ODI ID10375895. This complainant reported two near death experiences and the conditions of what the complainant experienced were identical to mine. Please pass this contact information on to complainant and then the complainant can decide, in turn, to contact me. In addition, my email address is [redacted] My fax number is [redacted] Is it possible that you can pass along the Vin Number on ODI ID10375895?

Thank you very much and have a good day.

[redacted]

Louisville KY [redacted]

August 18, 2011
Mr. Frank Borris

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