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AUG 23 2011

August 22, 2011

FAX ONLY

(202) 366-7882

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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:

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

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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]

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

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 cargo van could have been a E350

Sincerely
JCBX

E150

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".

[DiscoverThis](#)
Uniontown, OH
USA
Full Member
Joined:
06/16/2004

Posted: 06/21/11 06:27am

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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.

W

Woodalls Open Roads Forum (2011) PW Excel Steering Issue

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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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OldLadyDriver
San Luis Obispo
New Member
Joined:
06/20/2011
[View Profile](#)

Posted: 06/20/11 07:23pm

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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?'

Offline

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?

E-150

VOQ 10409490

DOWNTOWN INC.

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

August 22, 2011

[Redacted]

Louisville, Kentucky [Redacted]

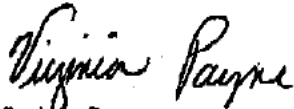
RE: 2011 Ford Econoline Van- 1FMNE1BW1BD [Redacted]

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

August 18, 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 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

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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 stays 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

Page 2 of 2

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.

Thanks for your time, consideration and cooperation on this matter.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Louisville KY
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]