



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

January 11, 2013

INFORMATION Redacted PURSUANT TO THE FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(B)(6)

NVS-216 mec
Ref. No. 10457109

Quincy IL, [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your correspondence concerning your model year (MY) 2007 Ford Freestar vehicle. Your correspondence was received by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Office of Defects Investigation.

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 motor vehicle equipment when our investigations indicate that they contain 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 trend may exist. We do not have authority to act on isolated problems or resolve disputes between individual owners, dealers, or manufacturers.

You indicate that the torque converter failed in your MY 2006 Ford Freestar vehicle while driving down the highway. You believe this problem is a result torque converter recall (NHTSA Safety Recall Campaign No. 12V-006) that affects certain MY 2004 and MY 2005 Ford Freestar vehicles. You believe the recall should also include MY 2006 and MY 2007 Ford Freestar vehicles.

We have reviewed our database in an effort to identify whether a safety defect trend exists with torque converters in MY 2006 and MY 2007 Ford Freestar vehicles. At this time, there is insufficient evidence to indicate a defect trend that warrants opening a safety defect investigation or expanding the scope of NHTSA Safety Recall Campaign No. 12V-006. However, the information provided has been entered into our database and will be considered with future reports to identify any safety defect trends that may require our attention. For your information, the NHTSA investigation and recall process can be found on our web site at www.nhtsa.gov.

The MY 2006 and MY 2007 Ford Freestar uses a similar transmission and torque converter; however, there are specific reasons why these vehicles are not included in the recall. The recall of MY 2004 and MY 2005 Ford Freestar vehicles for a torque converter safety defect was based on our investigation opened in November 2009, (engineering analysis EA09-016, enclosed). NHTSA received complaints alleging loss of motive power without warning due to torque converter output shaft failures. Ford identified that the supplier of the torque converters did not consistently meet the specific heat treatment requirements for the pump shaft spline. This problem affected MY 2004 and MY 2005 Freestar and Monterey vehicles during a specific production date range. In addition, this problem resulted in a specific torque converter failure where motive power was lost due to a sheared pump drive spline. The problem was corrected at the manufacturing facility and all torque converters produced after the correction date received proper heat treating, including the MY 2006 and MY 2007 Ford Freestar.

Should you encounter a safety-related problem with a motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment in the future, we would appreciate it if you would complete an electronic Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire online at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/ivoq or call the Auto Safety Hotline at 1-888-327-4236. Also, a summary listing of vehicle owners' complaints, safety recalls, manufacturers' service bulletins, etc. can be obtained at www.nhtsa.gov.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randy Reid".

Randy Reid, Chief
Correspondence Research Division
Office of Defects Investigation
Enforcement



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

ODI RESUME

OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

NHTSA
Authentic US Government Information
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
uses a digital certificate to ensure
the content has remained unchanged

Investigation: EA 09-016
Prompted by:
Date Opened: 11/10/2009
Investigator: Steve Mchenry
Approver: Frank Borris
Subject: Transmission Torque Converter Failure
Date Closed: 02/02/2012
Reviewer: Jeff Quandt

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: FORD MOTOR COMPANY
Products: 2004 and 2005 Ford Freestar and Mercury Monterey
Population: 205,896

Problem Description: Torque converter output shaft failure resulting in loss of motive power with no warning.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	532	890	1287**
Crashes/Fires:	1	1	2
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	3,715	3,715

***Description of Other:** Warranty claims: vehicle disablement and/or loss of motive power due to torque converter failure.

**** Count indicates duplicate reports received by ODI and manufacturer.**

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: This Engineering Analysis is closed. Recall 12V-006.

Summary:

On January 4, 2012 Ford Motor Company submitted a Defect Information Report (NHTSA Recall No. 12V-006) to NHTSA regarding a defect in the performance of the transmission torque converter for approximately 205,896 Ford Freestar and Mercury Monterey vehicles. The supplier of the torque converter manufactured converters containing a pump shaft spline that did not consistently meet the specified heat treatment requirements. In normal use, the spline may wear excessively and eventually fails without warning. If a torque converter malfunctions due to a sheared pump drive spline, the vehicle will abruptly lose motive power. This problem affected model year 2004 and 2005 Freestar and Monterey minivans.

During the investigation NHTSA identified 532 complaints alleging incidents of vehicle stall while driving due to torque converter failure. These failures were sudden and without any prior warning. Of the 490 complaints that reported the speed at the time of the failure: 218 (44%) occurred at or above 55 mph; and 344 (70%) occurred at or above 40 mph. Of the 382 complaints that reported the position of the vehicle relative to traffic after it came to a stop following the loss of motive power: 122 (32%) alleged that the vehicle came to a stop in the flow of traffic and remained in the flow of traffic until pushed or towed out of the way; 225 (59%) reported that the vehicle was maneuvered to the side of the roadway and remained there until towed; and 35 (9%) reported that they were able to maneuver to a location away from the flow of traffic, such as a parking lot. Two crashes were allegedly caused by torque converter failure, including an incident in which a Freestar suddenly lost power in 65 mph traffic in an area where there was no shoulder available. As a result, the Freestar stopped in a travel lane and when trailing traffic maneuvered to avoid the stalled vehicle, a four vehicle collision occurred. In these types of circumstances NHTSA believes the defect presents an unreasonable risk to motor vehicle safety and so advised Ford.

In its Defect Information Report, Ford refers to its response to NHTSA's Preliminary Evaluation information request, which stated that "a vehicle that loses motive power due to torque converter malfunction remains readily controllable; the vehicle will coast during which it can be safely maneuvered and stopped because the engine continues to run. Because the engine continues to run, steering and braking are unaffected, and the vehicle's electrical system and directional signals remain functional." In view of the foregoing, NHTSA does not agree with this statement.

This investigation is closed based on Ford's recall.

**ODI NUMBERS FOR 532 VOQ REPORTS
CITED IN EA09-016 CLOSING RESUME**

10206900, 10209338, 10212166, 10212176, 10212191, 10212686, 10212716, 10212933, 10213617,
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CITED IN EA09-016 CLOSING RESUME**

10375359, 10375608, 10376574, 10376798, 10376888, 10376967, 10377478, 10377991, 10378037,
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