

Department
Transportation
National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

DOT Auto Safety Hotline Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire

COPIES

1-888-DASH-2-DOOT
(1-888-327-4236)

INTERNET: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY

Date Received

RECEIVED

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00 SEP 14 AM 7:28

Reference No.

OFFICE
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

609975

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Domestic 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 answer, NHTSA WILL NOT provide your name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.

Signature of Owner

Date 9/8/00

PRODUCT INFORMATION

Vehicle Identification No. (VIN)
(7 Digits)

(Located at bottom of
windshield on driver's side)

Make

FORD

Model

XL EXPLORER

Year

1994

Purchased Date

Dealer's Name

HAROLD NYE FORD

Engine Size
(CID/CCA)

☐ Turbo

☐ Diesel

☐ Gas

☐ Fuel Injection

☐ New ☐ Used

Dealer's City

ONEIDA

State

N.Y.

Zip Code

13421

No. Cylinders

Manufacture Date
(on driver's door or pillar)

Transmission Type

☐ Manual

☒ Automatic

Restraint System

☐ Driverside Air Bag

☐ Motorized

☐ Passengerside Air Bag

☐ 2-Point Belt

☐ 3-Point Belt

Cruise Control

☒ Yes

☐ No

Drivetrain

☐ Front

☐ Rear

☒ 4-Wheel

Vehicle Type

☐ Car

☐ Van

☐ Other

☒ Sport Utility

☐ Truck

☐ Minivan

☐ Motorcycle

Body Style

☐ 2-Door

☐ Stationwagon

☐ Pick Up Truck

☒ 4-Door

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Part Name(s)

Location

☐ Left

☐ Front

☐ Right

☐ Rear

Failed Part(s)

☐ Original

☐ Replacement

Handicap Adaptive Equip

☐ Yes

☐ No

TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Brand

Tire Name

Complete Tire Size

No. of Failures

Date(s) of Failure(s)

Mileage at Failure(s)

Vehicle Speed at Failure(s)

Failed Part(s)
Available?

☐ Yes ☐ No

NHTSA Previously
Contacted?

☐ Yes ☒ No

APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION

(Please describe in detail the incident(s), failure(s), crash(es), and injury(ies). Attach photos if available.)

Crash

☐ Yes ☐ No

Fire

☐ Yes ☐ No

Number of Persons Injured

Number of Fatalities

Reported to Manufacturer

☐ Yes ☐ No

Narrative Description of Incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies).

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED LETTER FOR COMPLETE DETAILS

Continue on back.

September 8, 2000

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Office of Defects Investigation, NSA-10.01
400 7th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20590

Thank you very much for sending us the proper form needed to file this particular complaint which may deviate from exactly what is required on the complaint form due to mitigating circumstances, mainly, we no longer own the three vehicles so mentioned in this complaint and can only provide information based solely on our own personal experiences and we present this letter as LAYMEN who heavily relied upon mechanics as well as dealerships, trusting their integrity and honesty which we feel has been betrayed after learning about the harm caused by Bridgestone Firestone Tires which were on the three vehicles we are about to discuss in this complaint.

First vehicle: A Ford Explorer, 1991, VIN: 1FMDU34X2MUB49603, Eddie Bauer Class, 4-wheel drive, 4-doors purchased used from Harold Nye Ford in Oneida, New York. Purchased 7-13-94 at a price of \$18,354.60

This vehicle had for tires the same tires which the NTSB has notified the public about as being extremely dangerous. Although nobody ever was injured or killed in this vehicle which had these tires on, we wish to bring out to you people the following mechanical problems we had mainly with the front end and how we feel related to these tires and we most certainly feel, had we not engaged in mechanical repair, we too may not have been here to discuss this matter with you.

We have a repair bill from Ed Blask Ford dated September 23, 1996 which involved the front end, it needed a nut+hubs for the 4-wheel drive and other related front end repairs such as repl. it axle jnt. repack/ft bearings which came to a whopping total of \$393.25

First and foremost, the vehicle was mainly driven by my wife Arlene to and fro to her jobs. One major mechanical difficulty we experienced with the vehicle was the alignment and re-packing of the front wheels roughly every 6 months. We had problems with the front wheel alignment as well as the tie bar (did we spell that correctly?) The vehicle also "drifted". We believe, we are not certain, that we even changed shocks to prevent drifting as well as noises being expelled from the wheels themselves. Nothing worked.

vehicle in **PREMATURELY**.

The next vehicle we purchased from Harold Nye Ford was a 1994 (trade in of the 1991 Explorer) VIN: JFMDU34X7RUD56624, purchased on 10-31-96 again with Bridgestone Firestone tires on them. 4-wheel drive, 4-door

Basically the same exact problems but one exception, when my wife noticed the same problems she immediately went back to the salesman, Mr. Fran Cardinal, at Harold Nye Ford and told him that the vehicle was drifting just like the other Explorer and this was one of the reasons she traded it in. He replied, "It's the road Mrs. Hendricks."

Unlike the 1991 Explorer, we ran into greater mechanical problems with this vehicle. The transmission went and according to the transmission specialist, he insisted something was grabbing which caused the transmission to go but couldn't explain it. That mechanical job cost us roughly \$1,200.00 and it was shortly thereafter that we decided to trade the vehicle in.

All of the problems continued and none were resolved and again, it led to a **PREMATURE** purchase of a brand new vehicle, this time she purchased a 2000 WindStar, front wheel drive with Goodyear tires on them and she has not, we repeat, she has not experienced any of the problems on the same roads as she did with the two previously owned Ford Explorers such as drifting or tire noises.

The other vehicle in this complaint is a 1993 Ford Ranger, 4-wheel drive, pick up, two doors VIN: 1FTCR11USPUA64161, purchased from Harold Nye Ford on 4-4-93 for \$14,025.00. Again, this vehicle had Bridgestone Firestone tires on and yes, I did have handling problems with it. Like my wife's vehicles, this truck had a tendency to drift and I often found myself having to correct the steering as I went down the road. I had problems with the U-joints, needed re-packing of the wheels and the 4-wheel drive itself. I have before me one repair statement from Montgomery Ward in May of 1997, \$431.54 for front end work.

We have before us yet another billing from Montgomery Ward, we are sorry, we don't know which vehicle it was but the billing does show that the work was on the front end involving Replacement of Ball Joints and giving an Automotive Thrust Alignment.

We are certain that we have other bills as well which involve all three of these vehicle which we find out of the ordinary and can only relate to the tires. Such remarks as "your tires are out of round", "rotate your tires more often" and even shown uneven wear on the tires by Goodyear when we had them checked.

The 1993 Ford Ranger needed and got a 4-wheel drive replacement prior to us trading it in. Harold Nye Ford refused to trade the vehicle in at full value insisting that without the 4-wheel drive he would have to automatically deduct \$600.00. We didn't wish to impose problems on to Harold Nye Ford nor anyone purchasing the truck so we therefore had the repairs done, we believe by Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company

In Yorkville, New York on Commercial Blvd. We have yet to come upon that bill and others to support these issues of unusual mechanical failures of three vehicles all wearing Bridgestone Firestone tires.

We will leave this complaint as is for the present and will respond further, upon request from you people if you desire more information the front end repairs done to all three vehicles which nearly drove us into bankruptcy.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Hendricks

This is a P.S. to the attached statement regarding the fires on the Ford Ranger, 1993:

We have before us what Firestone Tire and Rubber Company referred to as a Courtesy Check. This is of importance and interest possibly more so for you people than us.

When the Ford Ranger had 59,820 miles on it, a "courtesy check" was done and it clearly shows on the check off list the following:

Tire size:	235/75/15	PSI in	PSI out
LR		35	35
RR		35	35
RF		35	35
LF		35	35

The same Courtesy Check was held on the same vehicle when the Ford Ranger had 66,793 and this is what Firestone done:

Tire size:	P235/75R/15	PSI in	PSI out
LR		27	35
RR		25	35
RF		27	30
LF		25	30

To us, as laymen, we find this odd but we cannot compare it to any other "courtesy checks" by any other mechanical repair place.

M [REDACTED]

Included as part of this complaint