

*Ford Motor Company*

RECEIVED  
NVS-210

2004 JAN 20 P 12:12

OFFICE OF DEFECTS  
INVESTIGATION

James P. Vondale, Director  
Automotive Safety Office  
Environmental & Safety Engineering

January 16, 2004

Ms. Kathleen C. DeMeter, Director  
Office of Defects Investigation Safety Assurance  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Ms. DeMeter:

Subject: EA02-027:NVS-212am

The Ford Motor Company response to the agency's December 12, 2003 letter requesting updated information related to alleged engine stalling on 2001 through 2002 model year Ford Escape vehicles equipped with 3.0L V6 engines is attached.

If you have any further questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

*James P. Vondale*

James P. Vondale

Attachment



**FORD MOTOR COMPANY (FORD) RESPONSE TO EA02-027**

Ford's response to this Engineering Analysis information request was prepared pursuant to a diligent search for the information requested. While we have employed our best efforts to provide responsive information, the breadth of the agency's request and the requirement that information be provided on an expedited basis make this a difficult task. We nevertheless have made every effort to provide thorough and accurate information, and we would be pleased to meet with agency personnel to discuss any aspect of this Engineering Analysis.

The scope of Ford's investigation conducted to locate responsive information focused on Ford employees most likely to be knowledgeable about the subject matter of this inquiry and on review of Ford files in which responsive information ordinarily would be expected to be found and to which Ford ordinarily would refer, as more fully described in this response. Ford notes that the engine control system, as stated in the agency's broad definition of "Alleged Defect," includes a myriad of components. Many of these components are likely not contributing significantly to the alleged stalling concerns. Therefore, although some documents relating to some of these components may be included in this response, Ford has concentrated its search for related documents on those conditions and components judged to be the most likely contributors to the alleged stalling concerns.

Ford also notes that although electronic information was included within the scope of its search, Ford has not attempted to retrieve from computer storage electronic files that were overwritten or deleted. As the agency is aware, such files generally are unavailable to the computer user even if they still exist and are retrievable through expert means. To the extent that the agency's definition of Ford includes suppliers, contractors and affiliated enterprises for which Ford does not exercise day-to-day operational control, we note that information belonging to such entities ordinarily is not in Ford's possession, custody or control. Ford has construed this request as pertaining to vehicles manufactured for sale in the United States, its protectorates and territories.

As requested, after each numeric designation, we have set forth verbatim the request for information, followed by our response. Ford has previously provided the kinds of information requested herein resulting from searches through December 12, 2002, the date of your original Engineering Analysis information request. Unless otherwise stated, Ford has undertaken in this response to provide information dated from December 13, 2002, up to and including December 12, 2003, the date of your present inquiry. Ford has searched business units and/or affiliates within the following offices for responsive documents: Ford Customer Service Division, Quality, Environmental and Safety Engineering, Marketing and Sales Operations, Powertrain Operations, Office of the General Counsel.

**Request 1**

State, by model and model year, the number of subject vehicles Ford has manufactured for sale or lease in the United States. Separately, for each subject vehicle manufactured to date, state the following:

- a. Vehicle identification number (VIN);
- b. Make;
- c. Model;
- d. Model Year;

- e. Date of manufacture;
- f. Date warranty coverage commenced; and
- g. The State in the United States where the vehicle was originally sold or leased (or delivered for sale or lease).

Provide the table in Microsoft Access 2000, or a compatible format, entitled "PRODUCTION DATA." See Enclosure 1, Data Collection Disc, for a pre-formatted table that provides further details regarding this submission.

#### Answer

The requested information was provided electronically in Appendix A (file: 2003-02-10\_A) of our February 10, 2003 response to the agency's December 12, 2002 letter.

#### Request 2

State the number of each of the following, received by Ford, or of which Ford is otherwise aware, which relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles:

- a. Consumer complaints, including those from fleet operators;
- b. Field reports, including dealer field reports;
- c. Reports involving a crash, injury, or fatality, based on claims against the manufacturer involving a death or injury, notices received by the manufacturer alleging or proving that a death or injury was caused by a possible defect in a subject vehicle, property damage claims, consumer complaints, or field reports;
- d. Property damage claims;
- e. Third-party arbitration proceedings where Ford is or was a party to the arbitration; and,
- f. Lawsuits, both pending and closed, in which Ford is or was a defendant or codefendant.

For subparts "a" through "c," state the total number of each item (e.g., consumer complaints, field reports, etc.) separately. Multiple incidents involving the same vehicle are to be counted separately. Multiple reports of the same incident are also to be counted separately (i.e., a consumer complaint and a field report involving the same incident in which a crash occurred are to be counted as a crash report, a field report and a consumer complaint).

In addition, for items c through f, provide a summary description of the alleged problem and causal and contributing factors and Ford's assessment of the problem, with a summary of the significant underlying facts and evidence. For items f and g, identify the parties to the action, as well as the caption, court, docket number, and date on which the complaint or other document initiating the action was filed.

#### Answer

For purposes of identifying reports of incidents potentially involving the alleged defect and any related documents, Ford has gathered "owner reports" and "field reports" maintained by Ford Customer Service Division (FCSD), Intensified Customer Concern Definition (ICCD) data

maintained by Ford's Quality Office, fleet reports maintained in a Fleet Test Database, and claim and lawsuit information maintained by Ford's Office of the General Counsel (OGC).

Descriptions of the FCSD owner and field report systems, the ICCD and the Fleet Test Database systems, and the criteria used to search each of these are provided electronically in Appendix A (file: 2004-01-16\_A) on the enclosed CD.

The following categorizations were used in the review of reports located in each of these searches:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Allegation</u>
A1	Alleged stall with restart
A2	Alleged stall with delayed/no start
A3	Alleged stall—unknown restart
B*	Ambiguous—unknown if vehicle stalled

"We are providing electronic copies of these ambiguous reports as "non-specific allegations" for your review because of the broad scope of the request. Based on our engineering judgment, the information in these reports is insufficient to support a determination that they pertain to the alleged defect.

Owner Reports: The search and review of the Ford Master Owner Relations Systems (MORS) database records, as described in Appendix A, identified the following number of owner reports in accordance with the categories described above:

<u>Category</u>	<u>A1</u>	<u>A2</u>	<u>A3</u>
<u>Reports</u>	27	57	684

Copies of these owner reports are provided in the MORS III portion of the electronic database contained in Appendix B (file: 2004-01-16\_EDDS) on the enclosed CD. The categorization of each report is identified in the "Category" field. When we were able to identify that responsive (i.e., not ambiguous) duplicate owner reports for an alleged incident were received, each of these duplicate reports is marked accordingly. In other cases, certain vehicles may have experienced more than one incident and have more than one report associated with their VINs. These reports have been counted separately.

Legal Contacts: Ford is providing in Appendix A a description of Legal Contacts and the Litigation Prevention activity that is responsible for this information. To the extent that responsive (i.e., not ambiguous) owner reports reflect that they are Legal Contacts, Ford has gathered the related files from the Litigation Prevention section. Based on this search, 25 files corresponding to responsive owner reports were located; the related documents are provided in Appendix C.

ICCD Information: A search of the ICCD database as described in Appendix A identified no reports that may relate to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles.

Fleet Reports: In addition to fleet reports that may be contained in the owner reports or field reports identified in this response, Ford conducted a search of its Fleet Test Database as described in Appendix A for reports that may relate to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles. Ford did not identify any responsive fleet reports.

**Field Reports:** The search and review of the Ford Common Quality Indicator System (CQIS) as described in Appendix A, identified the following number of field reports in accordance with the categories described above:

Category	A1	A2	A3
Reports	27	108	309

Copies of these field reports are provided in the CQIS portion of the electronic database contained in Appendix B. The categorization of each report is identified in the "Category" field. If we were able to identify that responsive (i.e., not ambiguous) duplicate field reports for an alleged incident were received, each of these duplicate reports is marked accordingly. In other cases, certain vehicles may have experienced more than one incident and have more than one report associated with their VINs. These reports have been counted separately. There are no allegations of accidents in these reports.

**Crash/Injury Incident Claims:** For purposes of identifying alleged accidents or injuries potentially related to the alleged defect, Ford has reviewed responsive (i.e., not ambiguous) owner and field reports, lawsuits and claims, and warranty claims. Based on a reasonable and diligent search, no field reports and no warranty claims were identified that alleged accidents or injuries. Three owner reports (VINs, 1FMCU0314KA14605, 1FMCU0410KD91169, and 1FMCU04112KB01927) and one product subrogation claim, duplicative of one of these owner reports (VIN 1FMCU0314KA14605) alleging minor accidents were identified. The first of these owner reports (VIN 1FMCU0314KA14605), alleges that the "veh stopped functioning, the transmission had no engagement, the brake did not work, and caused him to rear end another veh." The report goes on to say "no injuries sustained per customer." The second owner report (VIN 1FMCU0410KD91169) states that the customer "was coming from a stop sign when the vehicle stalled and was hit in the rear by another vehicle." No injuries are alleged in the report; however, handwritten notes from the Litigation Prevention file indicates the customer alleged, "neck sore." In the third incident (VIN 1FMCU04112KB01927), the customer alleges that the vehicle surged forward causing an accident. Upon inspection of this vehicle, the dealership service manager indicates that there was a stalling concern with the customer's vehicle and speculates that "the customer's vehicle stalled, and she panic restarted the vehicle and then it lunged forward striking two other vehicles. No injuries were sustained." Based upon available information, each of the three alleged accidents appears to have been minor. The owner reports are included in the MORS portions of the electronic database provided in Appendix B.

**Claims, Lawsuits, and Arbitrations:** For purposes of identifying claims, lawsuits and arbitrations potentially related to the alleged defect, Ford searched claim and lawsuit information maintained by Ford's OGC. Ford's OGC is responsible for handling product liability lawsuits, claims, and consumer breach of warranty lawsuits and arbitrations against the company.

Based on a reasonable and diligent search, Ford located one subrogation claims and 11 consumer breach of warranty complaints/lawsuits that appear to relate to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles. Another subrogation claim, not related to an alleged stalling incident, was also identified and is provided because it references a previous engine stalling event. Ford has also located one consumer breach of warranty complaint/lawsuit that is ambiguous as to whether it meets the alleged defect criteria. We have included this breach of warranty lawsuit complaint as a "non-specific allegation" for your review because of the broad scope of the request. Based on our engineering judgment, the information in this warranty lawsuit complaint is insufficient to support a determination that it pertains to the alleged defect. We are providing the requested detailed information, where available, on the responsive and ambiguous lawsuits

and claims in our Log of Lawsuits and Claims, as Appendix D (file: 2004-01-16\_D) on the enclosed CD. Copies of the subrogation claims are provided in Appendix E. Ford notes that the consumer matters relate only to warranty-based complaints. As previously discussed with the agency on February 6, 2003, Ford is not providing copies of documents from any of the Breach of Warranty complaints as the documents typically do not provide any information of significance other than the information already provided in the Log of Lawsuits and Claims in Appendix D. Should the agency wish to obtain copies of such documents from a Breach of Warranty complaint file, Ford would be pleased to provide copies of such documents upon request.

With regard to these lawsuits and claims, Ford has not undertaken to contact outside law firms to obtain additional documentation.

### Request 3

For each item (complaint, report, claim, notice, or matter) within the scope of your response to Request No. 2, state the following information:

- a. Ford's file number or other identifier used;
- b. The category of the item, as identified in Request No. 2 (i.e., consumer complaint, field report, etc.);
- c. Vehicle owner or fleet name (and fleet contact person), address, and telephone number;
- d. Vehicle's VIN;
- e. Vehicle's make, model and model year;
- f. Vehicle's mileage at time of incident;
- g. Incident date;
- h. Report or claim date;
- i. Whether a crash is alleged;
- j. Whether property damage is alleged;
- k. Number of alleged injuries, if any; and,
- l. Number of alleged fatalities, if any.

Provide this information in Microsoft Access 2000, or a compatible format, entitled "REQUEST NUMBER TWO DATA." See Enclosure 1, Data Collection Disc, for a preformatted table that provides further details regarding this submission.

### Answer

Appendix B contains the information requested in subparts a. through h. as part of the electronic data. Appendix F (file: 2004-01-16\_F) contains the accident and injury summary table of the information requested in subparts i. through l.

### Request 4

Produce copies of all documents related to each item within the scope of Request No. 2. Organize the documents separately by category (i.e., consumer complaints, field reports, etc.) and describe the method Ford used for organizing the documents.

Answer

As stated in Ford's response to Request 2, the owner reports and field reports are being provided in the electronic database contained in Appendix B. Copies of legal contacts are being provided in Appendix C. Copies of the subrogation claims are provided in Appendix E.

Request 5

State, by model and model year, a total count for all of the following categories of claims, collectively, that have been paid by Ford to date that relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles: warranty claims; extended warranty claims; claims for good will services that were provided; field, zone, or similar adjustments and reimbursements; and warranty claims or repairs made in accordance with a procedure specified in a technical service bulletin or customer satisfaction campaign.

Separately, for each such claim, state the following information:

- a. Ford's claim number;
- b. Vehicle owner or fleet name (and fleet contact person) and telephone number;
- c. VIN;
- d. Repair date;
- e. Vehicle mileage at time of repair;
- f. Repairing dealer's or facility's name, telephone number, city and state or ZIP code;
- g. Labor operation number;
- h. Problem code;
- i. Replacement part number(s) and description(s);
- j. Concern stated by customer; and,
- k. Comment, if any, by dealer/technician relating to claim and/or repair.

Answer

The search and review of the Analytical Warranty System (AWS) as described in Appendix A, identified the following number of warranty claims, in accordance with the categories described above:

## AWS

Category	A1	A2	A3
Reports	1,235	389	5,473

Appendix B contains copies of these claims. There are no allegations of a crash or injury in these claims.

In addition, Ford has identified other warranty claims that are ambiguous as to whether they pertain to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles. Appendix B contains copies of these warranty claims as "non-specific allegations" for your review because of the broad scope of the request. In our opinion, the information provided in these warranty claims is insufficient to support a determination that they relate to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles.

**Request 6**

Describe in detail, the search criteria used by Ford to identify the claims identified in response to Request No. 5, including the labor operations, problem codes, part numbers and any other pertinent parameters used. Provide a list of all labor operations, labor operation descriptions, problem codes, and problem code descriptions applicable to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles. State, by make and model year, the terms of the new vehicle warranty coverage offered by Ford on the subject vehicles (i.e., the number of months and mileage for which coverage is provided and the vehicle systems that are covered). Describe any extended warranty coverage option(s) related to the alleged defect that Ford offered for the subject vehicles and state by option, model, and model year, the number of vehicles that are covered under each such extended warranty.

**Answer**

Appendix A contains a description of the search criteria used to identify those claims that may be considered responsive to Request 5. The requested customer concern codes and the warranty condition codes are also provided in Appendix A.

Requests for "goodwill, field, or zone adjustments" received by Ford to date that relate to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles, if any, would be indicated in the MORS reports identified above in response to Request 2. Requests for goodwill that were honored, if any, are contained in the warranty data provided.

All 2001 through 2002 model year Ford Escape vehicles include the following warranty coverages:

- 36 month/36,000 miles; bumper-to-bumper
- 60 month/60,000 miles; safety restraint system
- 60 month/unlimited mileage; corrosion (perforation only)

As described in our Customer Satisfaction Bulletin 02M01, the Delta PFE sensor on all 2001 model year Escape vehicles have the following extended warranty:

Warranty Type	Current Warranty Coverage	Total (9J480) Warranty Coverage
Federal	3 Years/36,000 Miles	5 years/60,000 Miles
California Emissions*	3 Years/50,000 Miles	5 Years/74,000 Miles

A list of Ford Extended Services Plans (ESPs) that may relate to the engine or engine control systems that are available to Escape owners is provided in Appendix G (file: 2004-1-18\_Appendix\_G) on the enclosed CD with time/mileage coverage. The count of total subject vehicles participating in those ESPs is also provided in Appendix G. Ford notes that there are additional, various extended warranty plans offered by entities other than Ford. These plans are available for purchase both at dealerships and directly from the providers.



Ford has no information regarding the number of vehicles participating in extended warranty programs that are not available from Ford, and hence no information is provided for those vehicles in this response.

**Request 7**

Produce copies of all service, warranty, and other documents that relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles, that Ford has issued to any dealers, regional or zone offices, field offices, fleet purchasers, or other entities. This includes, but is not limited to, bulletins, advisories, informational documents, training documents, or other documents or communications, with the exception of standard shop manuals. Also include the latest draft copy of any communication that Ford is planning to issue within the next 120 days.

**Answer**

For purposes of identifying communications to dealers, zone offices, or field offices pertaining, at least in part, to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles, Ford has reviewed the following FCSD databases and files: The On-Line Automotive Service Information System (OASIS) containing Technical Service Bulletins (TSBs) and Special Service Messages (SSMs); Internal Service Messages (ISMs) contained in the CQIS; and Field Review Committee (FRC) files. We assume this request does not seek information related to electronic communications between Ford and its dealers regarding the order, delivery, or payment for replacement parts, so we have not included these kinds of information in our answer.

A description of Ford's OASIS messages, Internal Service Messages, and the Field Review Committee files and the search criteria used are provided in Appendix A.

**OASIS Messages:** Ford has identified no SSMs or TSBs in addition to those previously provided that may relate to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles.

**Internal Service Messages:** Ford has identified two ISMs in addition to those previously provided that may relate to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles copies of these are provided in Appendix H.

**Field Review Committee:** Ford did not identify any field service action communications that may relate to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles.

###

**Appendix A**

**Information in electronic format on  
enclosed CD.**

**File name: 2004-01-16\_A**

## Appendix B

Information in electronic format on  
enclosed CD.

File name: 2004-01-16\_EDDS