



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

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PB05-037
Date Opened: 07/07/2005 Date Closed: 11/02/2005
Principal Investigator: Kyle Bowker
Subject: Stuck Engine Throttle

Manufacturer: Ford Motor Company
Products: 2002 Ford Explorer and Mercury Mountaineer w/ 4.0L SOHC V6
Population: 234,092

Problem Description: The complaints allege that while driving the engine throttle became stuck in an open position due to a failure or condition of the throttle control cable causing unwanted vehicle acceleration.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	7	4	7
Crashes/Fires:	0	0	0
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
# Injuries:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	396	396

*Description Of Other: Warranty claims paid to replace or repair throttle control cable due to alleged stuck throttle.

Action: This Preliminary Evaluation has been closed.

Engineer: Kyle M. Bowker KMB

Date: 11/02/2005

Div. Chief: Jeffrey L. Quandt

Date: 11/02/2005

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 11/02/2005

Summary: On July 7, 2005, the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) opened a Preliminary Evaluation to investigate alleged stuck throttle complaints in certain model year (MY) 2002 Ford Explorer and Mercury Mountaineer vehicles equipped with the standard available 4.0L SOHC V6 engine. At that time, ODI was aware of 15 complaints that alleged stuck engine throttle causing unwanted vehicle acceleration and 1 alleged crash as a result. Six complainants reported that throttle control cable replacement remedied the alleged stuck throttle condition. Additionally, ODI was aware of a technical service bulletin issued by the manufacturer that referred to an accelerator cable design change. ODI sent a letter to the manufacturer on July 18, 2005 requesting certain information about these vehicles.

According to Ford, approximately 234,092 subject vehicles built from August 14, 2000 ("Job 1") through October 31, 2001 used a particular accelerator cable known as a 16 lay wire design. This design is comprised of the throttle cable surrounded by a conduit made of several concentric layers including a Teflon liner, a Nylon tube extruded over the Teflon liner, 16 lay wires wrapped around the Nylon tube, and finally a Nylon jacket extruded over and around the lay wires.

Continued on next page.

KMB

11-3-05

Summary continued:

Ford reports that throttle control concerns related to the accelerator cable are likely caused by a migration of the inner Teflon liner out of the conduit at the dash panel fitting. Should the Teflon liner migrate outward sufficiently to contact the accelerator pedal arm it could interfere with the pedal's ability to return to idle. In November 2001, Ford began using a new 12 lay wire design accelerator cable. This change was implemented to allow for installation of optionally available power-adjustable pedals.

Field data suggests that the condition with the subject cable is more prevalent in cold (winter) climates. Of the 396 warranty claims related to the alleged defect, nearly 68% occurred in winter months and most warranty claims are associated with vehicles sold in the northeastern, northern interior (Midwest), and Rocky Mountain regions of the United States. This seasonal trend appears to be in decline with fewer warranty claims paid in winter 2005 than in previous winters.

There are no known crashes related to the alleged defect on the subject vehicles, the complaint rate is low after approximately four years in service (3.0 incidents per 100,000 vehicles) and the failure trend is declining. There have been no new complaints since January 2005. A safety-related defect trend has not been identified at this time and further use of agency resources does not appear to be warranted. Accordingly, this investigation is closed. The closing of this investigation does not constitute a finding by NHTSA that a safety-related defect does not exist. ODI will continue to monitor its complaint database and will receive updated complaint and warranty data from Ford in spring 2006 to verify the trend analysis. The agency will take further action if warranted by the circumstances.