



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration**

SEP 1 2005

400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20580

**CERTIFIED MAIL**  
**RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

James Vondale, Director  
Automobile Safety and Engineering Standards Office  
Ford Motor Company  
Fairlane Plaza South  
330 Town Center Drive, Suite 400  
Dearborn, MI 48126

NVS-212cag  
RQ05-002

Dear Mr. Vondale:

This letter is to advise you that the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has opened a Recall Query (RQ05-002) to investigate safety recall 01V-075 (identified by Ford as Safety Recall -1S09) concerning approximately 60,000 Model Year (MY) 2000 Ford Excursion vehicles manufactured by Ford Motor Company, and to request certain information. Ford determined that due to the use of incorrect material by a second tier supplier, the headlamp switch knob may fracture and separate from the headlamp switch potentially making it difficult for the driver to activate the headlamps. By its letter dated March 2, 2001, Ford limited the scope of the recall to MY 2000 Excursion vehicles built from October 8, 1999 to October 30, 1999.

ODI has received 8 complaints alleging that the headlamp switch knob separated from the headlamp switch in certain MY 2000 Ford Excursion vehicles. All of the complainants confirm that their vehicles were built after October 30, 1999 and therefore, did not receive the recall repair. Electronic copies of these complaints have been sent to your office. The purpose of this investigation is to determine the adequacy of the scope of Ford's recall.

Unless otherwise stated in the text, the following definitions apply to this information request:

**Subject vehicles:** All MY 2000 Ford Excursion vehicles manufactured for sale or lease in the United States before October 8, 1999 and after October 30, 1999.

**Subject components:** headlamp switch knob.



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**Ford:** Ford Motor Company and all of its past and present officers and employees, whether assigned to its principal offices or any of its field or other locations, including all of its divisions, subsidiaries (whether or not incorporated) and affiliated enterprises and all of its headquarters, regional, zone and other offices and its employees, and all agents, contractors, consultants, attorneys and law firms and other persons engaged directly or indirectly (e.g., employee of a consultant) by or under the control of Ford (including all business units and persons previously referred to), who are or, in or after 1990, were involved in any way with any of the following related to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles:

- a. Design, engineering, analysis, modification or production (e.g. quality control);
- b. Testing, assessment or evaluation;
- c. Consideration, or recognition of potential or actual defects, reporting, record-keeping and information management, (e.g., complaints, field reports, warranty information, part sales), analysis, claims, or lawsuits; or
- d. Communication to, from or intended for zone representatives, fleets, dealers, or other field locations, including but not limited to people who have the capacity to obtain information from dealers.

**Alleged defect:** the headlamp switch knob fractures and separates from the headlamp switch making it difficult for the driver to activate the headlamps.

**Document:** "Document(s)" is used in the broadest sense of the word and shall mean all original written, printed, typed, recorded, or graphic matter whatsoever, however produced or reproduced, of every kind, nature, and description, and all non-identical copies of both sides thereof, including, but not limited to, papers, letters, memoranda, correspondence, communications, electronic mail (e-mail) messages (existing in hard copy and/or in electronic storage), faxes, mailgrams, telegrams, cables, telex messages, notes, annotations, working papers, drafts, minutes, records, audio and video recordings, data, databases, other information bases, summaries, charts, tables, graphics, other visual displays, photographs, statements, interviews, opinions, reports, newspaper articles, studies, analyses, evaluations, interpretations, contracts, agreements, jottings, agendas, bulletins, notices, announcements, instructions, blueprints, drawings, as-builts, changes, manuals, publications, work schedules, journals, statistical data, desk, portable and computer calendars, appointment books, diaries, travel reports, lists, tabulations, computer printouts, data processing program libraries, data processing inputs and outputs, microfilms, microfiches, statements for services, resolutions, financial statements, governmental records, business records, personnel records, work orders, pleadings, discovery in any form, affidavits, motions, responses to discovery, all transcripts, administrative filings and all mechanical, magnetic, photographic and electronic records or recordings of any kind, including any storage media associated with computers, including, but not limited to, information on hard drives, floppy disks, backup tapes, and zip drives, electronic communications, including but not limited to, the Internet and shall include any

drafts or revisions pertaining to any of the foregoing, all other things similar to any of the foregoing, however denominated by Ford, any other data compilations from which information can be obtained, translated if necessary, into a usable form and any other documents. For purposes of this request, any document which contains any note, comment, addition, deletion, insertion, annotation, or otherwise comprises a non-identical copy of another document shall be treated as a separate document subject to production. In all cases where original and any non-identical copies are not available, "document(s)" also means any identical copies of the original and all non-identical copies thereof. Any document, record, graph, chart, film or photograph originally produced in color must be provided in color. Furnish all documents whether verified by Ford or not. *If a document is not in the English language, provide both the original document and an English translation of the document.*

**Other Terms:** To the extent that they are used in these information requests, the terms "claim," "consumer complaint," "dealer field report," "field report," "fire," "fleet," "good will," "make," "model," "model year," "notice," "property damage," "property damage claim," "rollover," "type," "warranty," "warranty adjustment," and "warranty claim," whether used in singular or in plural form, have the same meaning as found in 49 CFR 579.4.

In order for my staff to evaluate the alleged defect, certain information is required. Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30166, please provide numbered responses to the following information requests. Insofar as Ford has previously provided a document to ODI, Ford may produce it again or identify the document, the document submission to ODI in which it was included and the precise location in that submission where the document is located. When documents are produced, the documents shall be produced in an identified, organized manner that corresponds with the organization of this information request letter (including all individual requests and subparts). When documents are produced and the documents would not, standing alone, be self-explanatory, the production of documents shall be supplemented and accompanied by explanation.

Please repeat the applicable request verbatim above each response. After Ford's response to each request, identify the source of the information and indicate the last date the information was gathered.

1. State the number of MY 2000 Ford Excursions vehicles Ford has manufactured for sale or lease in the United States. Separately, subtotal the subject pre-recall vehicles, recalled vehicles and post-recall vehicles. For each subject vehicle, state the following:
  - a. Vehicle identification number (VIN);
  - b. Model;
  - c. Model Year;
  - d. Date of manufacture;
  - e. Whether the vehicle is party of the original recall (01V-075);
  - f. Whether the recall remedy procedure was performed;

- g. Whether the headlamp switch knob was replaced;
- h. Date warranty coverage commenced; and
- i. 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."

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; and
  - 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 "d," 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" and "d," 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 "e" and "f," 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.

3. Separately, 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 model and model year;
- f. Vehicle mileage at time of incident;
- g. Incident date;
- h. Report or claim date;
- i. Whether the recall remedy procedure was previously performed;
- j. Whether the headlamp switch knob was replaced;
- k. Whether a crash is alleged;
- l. Whether property damage is alleged;
- m. Number of alleged injuries, if any; and
- n. Number of alleged fatalities, if any.

Provide this information in Microsoft Access 2000, or a compatible format, entitled "COMPLAINT DATA."

- 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.
- 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 for vehicles that have had the remedy recall procedure previously performed 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, "subsequent recall claim," or headlamp switch knob replacements made in accordance with the procedure specified in the original recall 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. Vehicle 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. Whether the recall remedy procedure was previously performed;
- h. Whether the headlamp switch knob was replaced;
- i. Labor operation number;
- j. Problem code;
- k. Replacement part number(s) and description(s);
- l. Concern or statements stated by customer; and
- m. Comment, if any, by dealer/technician relating to claim and/or repair.

Provide this information in Microsoft Access 2000, or a compatible format, entitled "WARRANTY DATA."

6. Describe in detail the search criteria used by Ford to identify the claims described 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) 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. Provide this information in Microsoft Excel or compatible format.
7. Produce copies of all service, warranty, and other documents or communications that relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles, and the training and use of any "special tools" 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, service bulletins, advisories, informational documents, training documents, service voicemails, or other documents or communications, with the exception of standard shop manuals. Also include the latest draft copy of any service communication or document that Ford is planning to issue within the next 120 days. Organize the documents or communications chronologically by action.
8. Describe all assessments, analyses, tests, test results, studies, surveys, simulations, investigations, inquiries and/or evaluations (collectively, "actions") that relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles that have been conducted, are being conducted, are planned, or are being planned by, or for, Ford. For each such action, provide the following information:
  - a. Action title or identifier;
  - b. The actual or planned start date;
  - c. The actual or expected end date;
  - d. Brief summary of the subject and objective of the action;
  - e. Engineering group(s)/supplier(s) responsible for designing and for conducting the action; and,
  - f. A brief summary of the findings and/or conclusions resulting from the action.

For each action identified, provide copies of all documents related to the action, regardless of whether the documents are in interim, draft, or final form. Organize the documents chronologically by action.

9. Describe all modifications or changes made by, or on behalf of, Ford in the design, material composition, manufacture, quality control, supply, or installation of the subject component,

from the start of production to date, which relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles including the root cause and manufacturing corrective action used during the original recall campaign (01V-075). For each such modification or change, provide the following information:

- a. The date or approximate date on which the modification or change was incorporated into vehicle production;
- b. A detailed description of the modification or change;
- c. The reason(s) for the modification or change;
- d. The part numbers (service and engineering) of the original component;
- e. The part number (service and engineering) of the modified component;
- f. Whether the original unmodified component was withdrawn from production and/or sale, and if so, when;
- g. When the modified component was made available as a service component; and
- h. Whether the modified component can be interchanged with earlier production components.

Also, provide the above information for any modification or change that Ford is aware of which may be incorporated into vehicle production within the next 120 days.

10. Produce one of each of the following:

- a. Exemplar samples of the pre- and post-recall design versions of the subject component;
- b. Field return samples of the subject component exhibiting the subject failure mode; and
- c. Functional "half-section" sample (one only) of the subject component.

11. State the number of headlamp switch knobs that Ford has sold subsequent to the recall campaign notification of March 2, 2001, that may be used in the subject vehicles by component name, part number (both service and engineering/production), model and model year of the vehicle in which it is used and month/year of sale (including the cut-off date for sales, if applicable.)

12. Answer the following for the subject component:

- a. Describe the assembly plant installation procedure. Include sketches and documentation.
- b. Identify the mating components and describe how the subject component mates to the mating components.
- c. List any tools used in production or service for installation and removal.

13. Furnish Ford's assessment of the alleged defect in the subject vehicle, including:

- a. The causal or contributory factor(s);
- b. The failure mechanism(s);
- c. The failure mode(s);

- d. The effect(s) of the failure;
- e. The risk(s) to consumer safety that it poses;
- f. What warnings, if any, the driver would have had that the alleged defect was occurring or the subject component was malfunctioning;
- g. A description of the analysis process used to assess items "a" through "f," and;
- h. The reports included with this inquiry.

This letter is being sent to Ford pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30166, which authorizes NHTSA to conduct any investigation that may be necessary to enforce Chapter 301 of Title 49 and to request reports and the production of things. It constitutes a new request for information. Ford's failure to respond promptly and fully to this letter could subject Ford to civil penalties pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30165 or lead to an action for injunctive relief pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30163. (Other remedies and sanctions are available as well.) Please note that maximum civil penalties under 49 U.S.C. § 30165 have increased as a result of the recent enactment of the Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation (TREAD) Act, Public Law No. 106-414 (signed November 1, 2000). Section 5(a) of the TREAD Act, codified at 49 U.S.C. § 30165(b), provides for civil penalties of up to \$16,050,000 for a related series of violations, for failing or refusing to perform an act required under 49 U.S.C. § 30166. See 49 CFR 578.6 (as amended by 69 Fed. Reg. 57864 (Sept. 28, 2004)). This includes failing to respond to ODI information requests.

If Ford cannot respond to any specific request or subpart(s) thereof, please state the reason why it is unable to do so. If on the basis of attorney-client, attorney work product, or other privilege, Ford does not submit one or more requested documents or items of information in response to this information request, Ford must provide a privilege log identifying each document or item withheld, and stating the date, subject or title, the name and position of the person(s) from, and the person(s) to whom it was sent, and the name and position of any other recipient (to include all carbon copies or blind carbon copies), the nature of that information or material, and the basis for the claim of privilege and why that privilege applies.

Ford's response to this letter, in duplicate, together with a copy of any confidentiality request, must be submitted to this office by **October 18, 2005**. Please refer to RQ05-002 in Ford's response to this letter. If Ford finds that it is unable to provide all of the information requested within the time allotted, Ford must request an extension from me at (202) 366-5218 no later than five business days before the response due date. If Ford is unable to provide all of the information requested by the original deadline, it must submit a partial response by the original deadline with whatever information Ford then has available, even if an extension has been granted.

If Ford claims that any of the information or documents provided in response to this information request constitute confidential commercial material within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 552(b) (4), or are protected from disclosure pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1905, Ford must submit supporting information together with the materials that are the subject of the confidentiality request, in



accordance with 49 CFR Part 512, as amended (69 Fed. Reg. 21409 et seq; April 21, 2004), to the Office of Chief Counsel (NCC-113), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5219, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Ford is required to submit two copies of the documents containing allegedly confidential information (except only one copy of blueprints) and one copy of the documents from which information claimed to be confidential has been deleted.

If you have any technical questions concerning this matter, please call Cynthia Glass of my staff at (202) 366-2920.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Thomas Cooper".

Thomas Cooper, Chief  
Vehicle Integrity Division  
Office of Defects Investigation

Enclosure: List of VOQ identification numbers

893710, 8001328, 10125252, 10121397, 10116400, 10104713, 10020616, 10009663