



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

400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

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

DEC - 8 2006

Mr. James Vondale, Director  
Automotive Safety Office, Environmental and Safety Compliance  
Ford Motor Company  
Fairlane Plaza South  
330 Town Center Drive, Suite 500  
Dearborn, MI 48126

NVS-211aa  
DP06-005

Dear Mr. Vondale:

This letter is to inform you that the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has received a Defect Petition (DP06-005) requesting an assessment of alleged engine stalling due to E-85 Ethanol fuel usage in certain Model Year (MY) 2003 through 2005 Ford Taurus and Mercury Sable Flex Fuel vehicles manufactured by Ford Motor Company, and to request certain information.

In addition to the petition, this office has received one vehicle owner questionnaire (VOQ) report alleging engine stalling due to E-85 fuel usage. The complainant alleged that the engine stalled (stopped running) without warning during operation on E-85 Ethanol. Copies of the VOQ and petition are attached for your information.

Unless otherwise stated in the text, the following definitions apply to these information requests:

- **Subject vehicles:** all MY 2003 through 2005 Ford Taurus and Mercury Sable Flex Fuel (E-85 Ethanol) vehicles manufactured for sale or lease in the United States.
- **Peer vehicles:** all MY 2003 through 2005 Ford Taurus and Mercury Sable vehicles lacking Flex Fuel capability manufactured for sale or lease in the United States.
- **Subject component:** fuel delivery system.
- **Ford:** Ford Motor Company, 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 their headquarters, regional, zone and other offices and their 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



VEHICLE SAFETY HOTLINE  
888-327-4236

business units and persons previously referred to), who are or, in or after 2003, 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:** engine stall while driving attributable to the fuel delivery system. As applied to the subject vehicles, this would be confined to stalling attributed to E-85.
  - **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)" 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, by model and model year, the number of subject and peer vehicles Ford has manufactured for sale or lease in the United States. Separately, for each vehicle manufactured to date by Ford, state the following:
  - a. Vehicle identification number (VIN);
  - b. Make;
  - c. Model;
  - d. Model Year;
  - e. Flex Fuel E-85 usage;
  - f. Transmission details (manual or automatic type, and model number);
  - g. Date of manufacture;
  - 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 and peer 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 "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" 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 "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 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.
  - m. Summary description of complaint, 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 that relate to, or may relate to, replacement of the subject component in the subject and peer 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.

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

In addition to the total counts requested above, provide Ford's assessment, by model and model year, of the number of claims within each of the counts given that relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect.

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) 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.
7. Produce copies of all service, warranty and other documents that relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles, and or the subject component, 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. Additionally, please furnish an electronic listing of subject

vehicles (VINs and service dates) that have received the software remedy described in Ford TSB 06-5-5 (enclosed).

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

8. Provide a list of the five largest fleets of subject vehicles in each of the following regions listed below. For each fleet identified, furnish a contact name, telephone number and business address.
  - a. Minnesota;
  - b. Illinois;
  - c. Iowa;
  - d. Nebraska; and
  - e. Wisconsin.
9. 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 risk to motor vehicle safety that it poses;
  - e. What warnings, if any, the operator and the other persons both inside and outside the vehicle would have that the alleged defect was occurring;
  - f. The report included with this inquiry;
  - g. Engine stall events alleged within the petition and
  - h. The ability to restart a vehicle that has experienced engine stall while driving during E-85 fuel usage;

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 \$5,000 per day, with a maximum of \$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, 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 January 29, 2007. Please refer to DP06-005 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) 366-5226 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 (accept 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 Ajit Alkondon of my staff at (202) 366-3565.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory Magno", followed by the word "for" in a smaller, handwritten font.

Gregory Magno, Chief  
Defects Assessment Division  
Office of Defects Investigation

Enclosure 1: Data collection CD-ROM with sample formats VOQ report,  
Enclosure 2: Public Citizen Petition  
Enclosure 3: Ford TSB 06-5-5



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration

**DOT Auto Safety Hotline**  
**Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire**  
**To Report Vehicle Safety Defects**  
**1-888-DASH-2-DOT**  
**(1-888-327-4236)**  
**INTERNET: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline**

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 100148

Date Received

26-JUN-2006

Repository ☐

Reference No.  
10160752

**OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)**

Name JESSE CHAPPLE

Address 2133 CAMERON DRIVE

City WOODBURY

State MN

Zip Code 55125

Daytime Telephone Number  
6518482889

E-mail Address  
JCHAPPLE@MSN.COM

Evening 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 authorization, NHTSA WILL NOT provide your name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.

Signature of Owner \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**VEHICLE INFORMATION**

17 digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side  
1FAFP552X4G195766

Make  
FORD

Model  
TAURUS

Model Year  
2004

Date Purchased  
02-MAY-05

Dealer's Name and Telephone Number  
STILLWATER FORD 6514302400

Engine:  
No: Cylinders 6

Fuel Type:  
Gas

Original Owner  
☐

Dealer's City  
STILLWATER

State  
MN

Zip Code

Transmission Type  
AUTOMATIC

☒ Antilock Brakes  
☒ Cruise Control

Powertrain  
FRONT WHEEL DRIVE

Vehicle Component Code  
060000 ENGINE AND ENGINE COOLING

Multiple Failure: 100

**FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION**

Incident Date(s)  
05-JAN-2006

Failure Mileage  
21000

Failure Speed

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE**

Tire Make

Tire Model (Name or Number)

Tire Size (Example P215/65R15)

DOT No. (Example: DOTM9ABC036)

☐ Original Equipment  
☐ Prior Repair

Failure Location:

Tire Component Code

Tire Failure Type

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A CHILD SEAT FAILURE**

Make:

Date Manufactured:

Model No./Name:

Seat Type:

Installation System:

Child Seat Component Code:

Failed Part:

**APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION**

(Please describe in detail the incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and injury(ies).)

Crash

☐ Yes ☒ No

Fire

☐ Yes ☒ No

Number of Persons Injured

0

Number of Deaths

0

Reported to Police

N

**Narrative Description of Incident(S), Crash(es), and Injury(ies).**

Please describe (1) events leading up to the failure, (2) failure and its consequences, and (3) what was done to correct the failure; i.e. parts repaired or replaced (and if old part is available).

2004 FORD TAURUS FFV.

1) THE CAR TAKES TWO OR MORE ATTEMPTS TO START THE ENGINE AFTER SITTING FOR 6+ HOURS ("COLD" ENGINE). VEHICLE IS RUNNING E85 ONLY.

2) AFTER IT STARTS, THE ENGINE CANNOT FIND AN IDLE AND CAN STALL OR REV UP UNEXPECTEDLY.

3) SO FAR TWO DIFFERENT DEALERSHIPS HAVE REPLACED THE FUEL PUMP WITH NO CHNAGE IN STATUS. ADDITIONALLY, ONE DEALERSHIP HAS BEEN PLAYING AROUND WITH THE COMPUTER PROGRAMMING. THIS HAS NOT SOV.ED THE PROBLEM. FORD'S ONLY SOLUTION TO DATE IS TO NOT USE E85 EVEN THOUGH THIS VEHICLE IS A FFV. \*JB

Include, if available: Police/Fire Department Report, Photos, and Repair Invoice.

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

The Privacy Act of 1974-Public Law 93-579 This information is requested pursuant to authority vested in the National Highway Traffic Safety Act and subsequent amendments. You are under no obligation to respond this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist the NHTSA in determining whether a Manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If the NHTSA proceeds with administrative enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.