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July 9, 2008

Ms. Kathleen C. DeMeter, Director
Office of Defects Investigation Safety Assurance
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., W45-302
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Ms. DeMeter:

Subject: EA06-020:NVS-212mjl

The Ford Motor Company (Ford) response to the agency's May 22, 2008, letter requesting certain information concerning 2005 through 2007 Ford Freestar and Mercury Monterey vehicles is attached. Ford understands that there is no alleged defect with respect to any of its vehicles and is providing this information as part of the agency's investigation of another manufacturer's vehicles.

If you have any questions concerning this response, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. A. Vondale".

James P. Vondale

Attachment



FORD MOTOR COMPANY (FORD) RESPONSE TO EA06-020

Ford's response to this peer vehicle 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 substantial effort to provide thorough and accurate information, and we would be pleased to meet with agency personnel to discuss any aspect of this peer vehicle inquiry.

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. Ford 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.

Ford notes that some of the information being produced pursuant to this inquiry may contain personal information such as customer names, addresses, telephone numbers, and complete Vehicle Identification Numbers (VINs). Ford is producing such personal information in an unredacted form to facilitate the agency's investigation with the understanding that the agency will not make such personal information available to the public under FOIA Exemption 6, 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(6).

Answers to your specific questions are set forth below. As requested, after each numeric designation, we have set forth verbatim the request for information, followed by our response. Unless otherwise stated, Ford has undertaken to provide responsive documents dated up to and including May 22, 2008, the date of your inquiry. Ford has searched within the following offices for responsive documents: Environmental and Safety Engineering, Ford Customer Service Division, Office of the General Counsel, Vehicle Operations, and North American Car Product Development.

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 by Ford, state the following:

- a. Vehicle identification number (VIN);
- b. Make;
- c. Model;
- d. Model Year;
- e. Date of manufacture;
- f. Date warranty coverage commenced;

- g. The State in the United States where the vehicle was originally sold or leased (or delivered for sale or lease); and
- h. Recall status (Ford recall no. 06S42; NHTSA recall no. 06V-069) of each vehicle: in scope – completed, in scope – not completed, in scope – unreachable, or out of scope.

Provide the table in Microsoft Access 2000, or a compatible format, entitled "PRODUCTION DATA."

Answer

Ford records indicate that the approximate total number of Freestar and Monterey vehicles equipped with a power liftgate and sold in the United States (the 50 states and the District of Columbia) and its protectorates and territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands) is 15,390.

The number of subject vehicles sold in the United States by model and model year is shown below:

Model	2005 MY	2006 MY	2007 MY
Freestar	4,969	4,020	801
Monterey	3,073	2,013	514

The requested data for each subject vehicle is provided electronically in Appendix A (filename: 2008-07-09 Appendix A) on the enclosed CD.

Request 2

State the number of each of the following, received by Ford, or of which Ford are otherwise aware, which relate to, or may relate to, the subject condition 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 "f," 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.

Answer

For purposes of identifying reports of incidents that may be related to the subject condition and any related documents, Ford has gathered "owner reports" and "field reports" maintained by Ford Customer Service Division (FCSD), and claim and lawsuit information maintained by Ford's Office of the General Counsel (OGC).

Descriptions of the FCSD owner and field report systems and the criteria used to search each of these are provided electronically in Appendix B (filename: 2008-07-09 Appendix B) on the enclosed CD.

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

Category	Allegation
A1	Diminished liftgate performance, strut replaced (prior to completion of 06S42)
A2	Diminished liftgate performance, strut replaced (replaced as part of 06S42)
A3	Diminished liftgate performance, strut replaced (after completion of 06S42)
A4	Diminished liftgate performance, strut replaced (vehicle outside of scope of 06S42)

Owner Reports: Records identified in a search of the Master Owner Relations Systems (MORS) database, as described in Appendix B, were reviewed for relevance and categorized in accordance with the categories described above. The number and copies of relevant owner reports identified in this search that may relate to the agency's peer vehicle information request are provided in the MORS III portion of the electronic database contained in Appendix C (filename: 2008-07-09 Appendix C) 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 was marked accordingly, and the group counted as one report. 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 B, a description of Legal Contacts and the activity that is responsible for this information, Litigation Prevention. To the extent that responsive (i.e., not ambiguous) owner reports indicate that they are Legal Contacts, Ford has gathered the related files from the Litigation Prevention section. Non-privileged documents for files that were located that are related to the responsive owner reports are provided electronically in Appendix D (filename: 2008-07-09 Appendix D) on the enclosed CD.

Field Reports: Records identified in a search of the Common Quality Indicator System (CQIS) database, as described in Appendix B, were reviewed for relevance and categorized in accordance with the categories described above. The number and copies of relevant field

reports identified in this search that may relate to the agency's peer vehicle information request are provided in the CQIS portion of the electronic database contained in Appendix C on the enclosed CD. The categorization of each report is identified in the "Category" field.

When we were able to identify that responsive duplicate field reports for an alleged incident were received, each of these duplicate reports was marked accordingly, and the group counted as one report. 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. In addition, field reports that are duplicative of owner reports are provided in Appendix C but are not included in the field report count.

Crash/Injury Incident Claims: For purposes of identifying allegations of accidents or injuries that may have resulted from the subject condition, Ford has reviewed responsive owner and field reports, and lawsuits and claims. A chart identifying potentially relevant allegations is being provided electronically as Appendix E (filename: 2008-07-09 Appendix E) on the enclosed CD. Copies of reports corresponding to these alleged incidents are provided in the MORS, CQIS, and Analytical Warranty System (AWS) portions of the electronic database provided in Appendix C.

Claims, Lawsuits, and Arbitrations: For purposes of identifying incidents that may relate to the subject condition, Ford has gathered 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. No claims or lawsuits were identified in our search.

Request 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.

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

Answer

Ford is providing owner and field reports in the electronic database contained in Appendix C on the enclosed CD in response to Request 2. To the extent information sought in Request 3 is available for owner and field reports, it is provided in the referenced appendix.

Request 4

Produce electronic 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

Ford is providing owner and field reports in the electronic database contained in Appendix C on the enclosed CD in response to Request 2. To the extent information sought in Request 4 is available, it is provided in the referenced appendix.

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 subject condition 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 reformation:

- 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."

Answer

Records identified in a search of the AWS database, as described in Appendix B, were reviewed for relevance and categorized in accordance with the categories described in the response to Request 2. The number and copies of relevant warranty claims identified in this

search that may relate to the agency's peer vehicle information request are provided in the AWS portion of the electronic database contained in Appendix C (filename: 2008-07-09 Appendix C) on the enclosed CD. The categorization of each report is identified in the "Category" field.

When we were able to identify that duplicate claims for an alleged incident were received, each of these duplicate claims was marked accordingly and the group counted as one report. In other cases, certain vehicles may have experienced more than one incident and have more than one claim associated with their VINs. These claims have been counted separately. Warranty claims that are duplicative of owner and field reports are provided in Appendix C but are not included in the report count above.

Requests for "goodwill, field or zone adjustments" received by Ford to date that relate to the alleged defect that were not honored, if any, would be included in the MORS reports identified above in response to Request 2. Such claims that were honored are included in the warranty data provided.

Request 6

Describe in detail the search criteria used by Ford to identify the claims identified in response to Request 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.

Answer

Detailed descriptions of the search criteria, including all pertinent parameters, used to identify the claims provided in response to Request 5 are described in Appendix B.

For 2005 through 2007 model year Ford Freestar and Mercury Monterey vehicles, the New Vehicle Limited Warranty, Bumper-to-Bumper Coverage begins at the warranty start date and lasts for three years or 36,000 miles, whichever occurs first. Optional Extended Service Plans (ESPs) are available to cover various vehicle systems, time in service, and mileage increments. The details of the various plans are provided electronically in Appendix F (filename: 2008-07-09 Appendix F) on the enclosed CD. As of the date of the information request, 18,268 new vehicle ESP policies had been purchased on 2005 through 2007 model year Ford Freestar and Mercury Monterey vehicles. The number of ESP policies includes all 2005 through 2007 model year Ford Freestar and Mercury Monterey vehicles.

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 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 subject component 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 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, ISMs, and the Field Review Committee files and the search criteria used are provided in Appendix B.

OASIS Messages: Ford has not identified any SSMs or any TSBs that may relate to the subject condition in the subject vehicles.

Internal Service Messages: Ford has not identified any ISMs that may relate to the subject condition in the subject vehicles.

Field Review Committee: Ford has identified three field service action communications that may relate to the subject condition in the subject vehicles and is providing copies of them in Appendix G (folder name: 2008-07-09 Appendix G) on the enclosed CD. These communications are related to Ford's field service action 06S42 (NHTSA Recall No. 06V-069) for 2005 and 2006 Ford Freestar and Mercury Monterey vehicles.

Request 8

State, by model and model year, a total count for all completed recall repair procedures that have been paid by Ford to date that relate to the NHTSA Recall No. 06V-069:

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

- 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 "CAMPAIGN DATA."

Answer

Ford conducted a search of the AWS database using the labor operation code(s) for Field Service Action 06S42. The number and copies of the warranty claims identified in this search are provided in a database contained in Appendix H (filename: 2008-07-09 Appendix H) on the enclosed CD.

In an effort to provide updated and complete information, Ford has identified 12 VINs that appear in the database contained in Appendix A as having the recall completed but do not have a corresponding AWS claim in Appendix H. Five of these vehicles were recently repaired under the field service action but the corresponding AWS claim was not yet available in the AWS database as of the time of the search conducted to respond to this information request. Six vehicles are identified as having the recall completed, but the corresponding warranty claim for the repair has not been submitted. Finally, one vehicle sold in the United States has been repaired in Germany.

Request 9

Provide Ford's responses to the following requests that relate to the NHTSA Recall No. 06V-069:

- a. Describe, in detail, the conditions that would cause the power liftgate feature in the subject vehicles to become disabled and set a fault code in the power liftgate control module—additional features that Ford programmed into the control module;
- b. Describe, in detail, the repair protocol for the subject vehicles in which the power liftgate feature has become disabled or has set a fault code due to a liftgate strut failure, and whether or not it includes an inspection and repair of the liftgate struts;
- c. Provide a copy of the repair procedures of the recall remedy; and
- d. Provide Ford's assessment as to whether the recall remedy was implemented in the subject vehicles as intended and has been performing in the field as intended.

Answer

A detailed description of the power liftgate function, including conditions for disabling of the system and fault code information is provided in Appendix I (filename: 2008-07-09 Appendix I) on the enclosed CD.

Ford's field service action (06S42) involved reprogramming the power liftgate control module on certain 2005 and 2006 model year Ford Freestar and Mercury Monterey vehicles and consisted of a three step process. First, the service technician was instructed to verify the software level installed in the diagnostic tool and to update the software if required. Next, the service technician was instructed to clear the vehicle's obsolete power liftgate control module software and install the upgraded power liftgate control module software. Last, the technician was instructed to operate the power liftgate to confirm proper operation. If the power liftgate module did not perform as expected (e.g. a freely falling liftgate or a liftgate that immediately entered a powered closed operation after opening), technicians were instructed to contact Ford Special

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Service Support Center. Depending on the condition, technicians were directed to either reinstall the new software or to replace the liftgate struts under warranty at no cost to the customer. A copy of the repair procedure for field service action 06S42 (NHTSA Recall No. 06V-069) is provided electronically in Appendix G on the enclosed CD.

It is Ford's assessment that the recall remedy has been implemented as intended and is performing in the field as intended.

Request 10

Produce two copies of the owner's manual for MY 2005 Ford Freestar vehicles.

Answer

The owner's manual for the 2005 model year Ford Freestar is provided electronically in Appendix J (filename: 2008-07-09 Appendix J) on the enclosed CD.

Request 11

State the number of each component/assembly of the subject components that Ford has sold 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 the sale (including the cut-off date for sales, if applicable). Include any kits that have been released, or developed, by Ford for use in service repairs to the subject component/assembly which relate, or may relate, to the subject condition in the subject vehicles.

For each component part number, provide the supplier's name, address, and appropriate point of contact (name, title, and telephone number). Also, identify by make, model and model year, any other vehicles of which Ford is aware that contain the identical component, whether installed in production or in service, and state the applicable dates of production or service usage.

Answer

As the agency is aware, Ford service parts are sold in the U.S. to authorized Ford and Lincoln-Mercury dealers. Ford has no means by which to determine how many of the parts were actually installed on vehicles, the vehicle model or model year on which a particular part was installed, the reason for any given installation, or the purchaser's intended use of the components sold.

Ford is providing the total number of Ford service replacement power liftgate struts by part number (both service and engineering) and year of sale, where available, in electronic form in Appendix K (filename: 2008-07-09 Appendix K) on the enclosed CD. Information pertaining to production and service usage for each part number, and supplier point of contact information, is also included.

Request 12

Describe, in detail, all aspects of the operation of the power liftgate feature in the subject vehicles both before and after implementation of the remedy associated with NHTSA recall No. 06V-069. Include any built-in safety features and any features designed to

mitigate potential injuries from a descending or otherwise falling liftgate. Describe, in detail, the safety-related features that operate or activate when the struts can no longer maintain the liftgate in the full open position. In your answer, include a discussion of how the safety features operate. Include a description of the circumstances in which the safety features will activate and a description of how the safety features operate in each circumstance

Answer

A detailed description of the power liftgate function both before and after the recall remedy is provided in Appendix I (filename: 2008-07-09 Appendix I) on the enclosed CD.

Request 13

Describe, in detail, the operation of the power liftgate feature in the subject vehicle, both before and after implementation of the remedy associated with NHTSA Recall No. 06V-069, when equipped with struts that cannot support the liftgate in the open position. In your description, discuss how this feature operates and include nominal speed threshold (including tolerance) required to activate the power close feature.

Answer

A detailed description of the power liftgate function both before and after the recall remedy is provided in Appendix I (filename: 2008-07-09 Appendix I) on the enclosed CD.

Request 14

Produce copies of all documents that relate to your response to Request Nos. 12 and/or 13.

Answer

Documents that relate to the responses provided to Request Nos. 12 and 13 are provided as part of Ford's response to Request No. 17.

Request 15

State whether the controlled (automatic) closing design feature will activate when the struts cannot support the liftgate and the operator manually opens the liftgate to the fully-open position, as well as when the operator manually opens the liftgate to a position less than full-open, both before and after implementation of the remedy associated with NHTSA Recall No. 06V069.

Answer

A detailed description of the power liftgate function both before and after the recall remedy is provided in Appendix I (filename: 2008-07-09 Appendix I) on the enclosed CD.

Request 16

Produce copies of all documents that relate to your response to Request No. 15.

Answer

All documents that relate to the response provided to Request No. 15 are provided as part of Ford's response to Request No. 17.

Request 17

Furnish copies of all communications sent from and received by Ford that relate to or may relate to the subject condition (including the performance and durability of the subject component), including but not limited to such communications between Ford and the subject component manufacturer and between employees and/or entities within Ford (e.g., any such communication between Ford Motor Company and a subsidiary).

Answer

In an email dated June 20, 2008, Michael Lee of the agency refined this request to specifically relate to "all communications that relate to the March 2006 recall – including those that relate to the identification of the defect and the determination of the defect remedy – and all communications that relate to the subject condition after the recall was initiated..."

Ford is providing documents that were located pursuant to a diligent search for the requested information. Ford is providing the responsive non-confidential Ford documentation in Appendix L (folder name: 2008-07-09 Appendix L) on the enclosed CD.

Ford is providing additional responsive documentation as Appendix M (folder name: 2008-07-09 Appendix M) with a request for confidentiality under separate cover to the agency's Office of the Chief Counsel pursuant to 49 CFR, Part 512.

Ford is providing a privilege log as Appendix N (filename: 2008-07-09 Appendix N) and is also providing redacted copies of these documents as part of our non-confidential submission.

In the interest of ensuring a timely and meaningful submission, Ford is not producing non-responsive materials or items containing little substantive information. Through this method, Ford is seeking to provide the agency with substantive responsive materials in our possession in the timing set forth for our response. We believe our response meets this goal. Should the agency request additional materials, Ford will cooperate with the request.