



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration**

## ODI RESUME

**Investigation:** PE 11-018  
**Date Opened:** 05/11/2011  
**Investigator:** Steve Mchenry  
**Approver:** Scott Yon  
**Subject:** Throttle Control Malfunction  
**Reviewer:** Jeff Quandt

### MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

**Manufacturer:** FORD MOTOR COMPANY  
**Products:** MY 2005 through 2007 Ford Freestyle  
**Population:** 170,000 (Estimated)  
**Problem Description:** Throttle body malfunction may result in unexpected vehicle movement.

### FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
<b>Complaints:</b>	245	TBD	TBD
<b>Crashes/Fires:</b>	18	TBD	TBD
<b>Injury Incidents:</b>	1	TBD	TBD
<b>Number of Injuries:</b>	1	TBD	TBD
<b>Fatality Incidents:</b>	0	TBD	TBD
<b>Other*:</b>	120	TBD	TBD

**\*Description of Other:** Unverified allegations of lunging consistent with a throttle body malfunction.

### ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

**Action:** A Preliminary Evaluation has been opened.

#### Summary:

ODI has received 238 complaints alleging incidents of unexpected vehicle movement when the driver's foot is not on the accelerator in model year 2005 through 2007 Ford Freestyle vehicles. Complainants allege that the vehicle brakes are effective in either preventing or stopping the movement, but in some cases the vehicle has moved as much as 10 feet if the brake was not applied, lightly applied or applied late. The movement resulting from the unexpected idle speed increase, often described as a "lunge," is alleged to have resulted in 18 minor crashes.

Reports allege that the lunging occurs when the driver's foot is not on the accelerator and either firmly on the brake pedal, lightly on the brake pedal, or hovering above the pedals (such as may occur when coasting under idle speed). Incidents occurring during firm brake application note increased engine rpm, but no vehicle movement. In incidents occurring when the brake is not applied or lightly applied, vehicle movement may result. Incidents have been reported in both forward and reverse gears. Complaints allege that the lunge is sudden and unexpected, and generally of brief duration. There is some indication that the condition may be made worse with during air-conditioning operation or when the steering wheel is turned a significant amount, as may occur during low-speed parking lot type maneuvers - conditions which are part of normal idle control strategy to compensate for increased engine load from cycling of the air-conditioning compressor or power steering pump.

ODI has identified 18 minor crashes that may be related to the subject condition, none of which resulted in an airbag deployment. One crash involved a minor impact with a pedestrian in a residential driveway, resulting in a minor injury (bruised knee not requiring medical attention). A list of the specific ODI complaint identification numbers related to the Failure Report will be submitted as a separate memo to the investigation file.

A Preliminary Evaluation has been opened to assess the scope, frequency, and safety-related consequences of the alleged defect.