



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 14-021
Date Opened: 07/07/2014
Investigator: Chris Lash
Approver: Frank Borris
Subject: Steering Column Shaft Obstruction
Date Closed: 11/21/2014
Reviewer: Jeff Quandt

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: Ford Motor Company
Products: MY 2004 to 2007 Crown Victoria, Grand Marquis, Marauder
Population: 502,410
Problem Description: The drivers side exhaust manifold heat shield can rust and become dislodged, potentially interfering with the steering shaft.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	8	10	18**
Crashes/Fires:	0	0	0
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0

** Total eliminates duplicates received by ODI and manufacturer.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: This preliminary evaluation is closed.

Summary:

On July 7, 2014 the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) opened a preliminary evaluation based on five complaints (VOQs) alleging incidents of interference between dislodged exhaust manifold heat shields and the lower steering shaft/knuckle, including one alleging the interference resulted in a crash on a highway entrance ramp. Since opening this investigation, ODI has received four additional owner complaints. One indicated that the shield was removed before binding could occur. The other three occurred at low speed and produced some momentary steering binding that was overcome by the driver when additional steering effort was applied. Once the shield was repaired or removed, the steering returned to normal. The single incident ODI identified as a possible crash (VOQ No. 10578715) related to this condition could not be verified and the description of the crash in the complaint was not supported by the police accident report. No additional crash allegations have been identified related to the alleged defect condition.

Information provided by Ford in its September 10, 2014 response to ODI's information request letter identified 10 additional incidents resulting in a low rate of 1.6 incidents per 100,000 vehicles sold in vehicles ranging from 7 to 11 years in service. Six of these incidents were reported by a single source, a state police fleet that corrected the problems in March 2011 and has not reported any additional failures since. Ford also reported 5 warranty claims, but these incidents occurred at very low mileages and appeared to be caused by loose or missing heat shield attachment hardware rather than the corrosion condition that was the cause of the more recent incidents and the focus of this investigation.

This investigation is closed. The closing of this investigation does not constitute a finding by NHTSA that a safety-related defect does not exist. The Agency will continue to monitor complaints and other information relating to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles and take further action in the future if warranted.

The following VOQs are associated with this investigation: 10643753, 10615584, 10611362, 10610451, 10578715,

10479681, 10471833, 10317493.