



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 17-007
Date Opened: 10/23/2017
Investigator: Nathan Ong
Approver: Stephen Ridella
Subject: Steering Wheel Fastening Bolt Loosens
Date Closed: 04/23/2018
Reviewer: Paul Simmons

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: Ford Motor Company
Products: 2014-2016 Ford Fusion
Population: 839,015
Problem Description: The steering wheel fastening bolt loosens.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	39	47	86
Crashes/Fires:	0	2	0
Injury Incidents:	0	1	0
Number of Injuries:	0	1	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	722	720**

*Description of Other: Warranty claims not included in complaints

** Total eliminates duplicates received by ODI and manufacturer.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: This Preliminary Evaluation is closed. Recall 18V-167

Summary:

On March 12th, 2018, Ford Motor Company submitted a Defect Information Report to NHTSA describing a defect in the steering wheel fastening system of approximately 1,301,986 model year (MY) Ford Fusion and Lincoln MKZ. On March 1, 2018, Ford discovered a design change that affected the MY 2014-2018 subject vehicles. The affected population are MY 2014-2016 Fusion and MKZ with manual and power adjust steering columns and MY 2017-2018 Fusion and MKZ equipped with manual adjust steering columns only. The affected populations have steering shafts with a reduced amount of threads for the steering wheel bolt to engage. The thread length was decreased by 5mm in the affected models. Ford stated that another contributing factor was the placement of a nylon locking patch torque retention on the fastening bolt. As a result, the steering wheel bolt may not maintain torque allowing the bolt to loosen and eventually separate from the steering shaft, resulting in a loose or detached steering wheel.

The two crashes and one injury noted in Ford's Defect Information Report are from two legal claims. The first accident is a claim where the driver reported the steering wheel twisted freely on the shaft which caused the driver to lose control. An injury was alleged but no details were provided. The second claim resulted in minor damage to the driver side of the vehicle including a punctured tire. No injury was reported.

Ford's recall remedy procedure will use a bolt that is 17mm longer, providing a more robust steering column thread and torque retention patch engagement. The torque retention feature will be 13mm longer to ensure proper engagement.

This investigation is closed based on Ford's recall.