



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

OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

ODI RESUME

Investigation: DP25001
Prompted By: Defect Petition
Date Opened: 09/05/2025
Date: 04/09/2026
Closed:
Investigator: Jayson Winick
Reviewer: Peter Kivett
Approver: Tanya Topka
Subject: Underbody shields detachment

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: Ford Motor Company
Products: MY 2020 Ford Explorer
Population: 265,591

Problem Description: The petition alleges degradation and detachment of underbody shields.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	EWR D&I	Other	Total	EWR Field Reports
All Incidents:	1	0	0	0	1	0
Crashes/Fires:	0	0	0	0	0	0
Injury Incidents:	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of Injuries:	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of Fatalities:	0	0	0	0	0	0

ACTION/SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: Petition is denied; close this Defect Petition.

Summary:

The Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) received a petition on August 22, 2025, requesting a defect investigation into an alleged defect of the “underbody shields” on model year (MY) 2020 Ford Explorer vehicles. The petition alleges premature degradation and detachment of the plastic underbody shields, potentially leading to road debris. The petition itself can be reviewed at [NHTSA.gov](https://www.nhtsa.gov) under ODI number 11682326.

A search of the subject vehicle population was undertaken using complaints submitted to ODI. No related complaints were found in NHTSA's database for the subject vehicle population. Subsequently, ODI conducted a

broadener search for related complaints and field reports involving MY 2020-2025 Ford Explorer and Lincoln Aviator models, as these vehicles utilize substantially similar underbody shields. No complaints or reports were found citing any allegations pertaining to any of the underbody shields. ODI also reviewed manufacturer information and data and did not identify a trend related to the Petitioner's allegations.

Based on the absence of consumer complaints and reports, ODI has not identified a material risk of a complete detachment or a projectile hazard related to this condition. The petitioner's description of detectable symptoms - including noise and vibration that progressively worsen and visible sagging of the shields underneath the vehicle - indicates a failure mode that provides drivers with ample notice to seek service before a potential detachment.

In view of the insufficient evidence of a vehicle-based defect pertaining to the underbody shields of the subject vehicle, ODI is denying this Defect Petition. A Federal Register Notice (FRN) further detailing NHTSA's reasons for denial of the petition will be published. The Agency reserves the right to take additional action if warranted by future circumstances. To review the report cited in the Closing Resume ODI Report Identification Number document, go to [NHTSA.gov](https://www.nhtsa.gov).