

Ford Motor Company

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OFFICE
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

L. W. Camp, Director
Automotive Safety Office
Environmental and Safety Engineering

November 30, 2000

Mr. Kenneth N. Weinstein
Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

00V-412 (21)

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

Pursuant to Part 573 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Defect and Noncompliance Reports, Ford Motor Company submits the following information concerning a safety-related recall action that it is initiating.

573.5 (c) (2)

Certain 2001 model year Ford Windstar vehicles produced at the Oakville Assembly Plant, Certain 2001 Lincoln Town Car vehicles produced at the Wixom Assembly Plant and certain 2001 model year Ford Crown Victoria and Mercury Grand Marquis vehicles produced at the St. Thomas Assembly Plant. The affected vehicles were produced from August 8, 2000 through September 29, 2000.

Because these vehicles are not produced in VIN order, information as to the applicability of this action to specific vehicles can best be obtained by either calling Ford's toll-free line (1-800-392-3673) or contacting a local Ford or Lincoln/Mercury dealer, who can obtain specific information regarding the vehicles from the Ford OASIS computer system.

The Restraint Control Modules (RCM) mentioned later in this letter were supplied to Ford by ASL Takata, 27200 Haggerty Road, Suite B-12, Farmington Hills, MI 48331. Takata's phone number is (248) 373-2985.

573.5 (c) (3)

Approximately 16,000 vehicles.

573.5 (c) (4)

Unknown.



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573.5 (c) (5)

The subject vehicles may have a restraint control module (RCM) or a side or front crash sensor that may have been assembled by the supplier with one or more of the screws that mount the circuit board in the housing missing. This occurred because of a software change that inadvertently deleted the repair required marking on the assembly line pallets when the screw drive station did not successfully complete its cycle. Thus, pallets with modules having some or all of the screws missing were continuing down the line to the sealant station without required repairs. If some or all of the screws are missing, the performance of the occupant restraints could be affected. In some cases, less than the intended level of occupant restraint could be available in the event of a vehicle crash.

573.5 (c) (6)

Ford first became aware of this condition on September 20, 2000 when a restraint control module in a vehicle at the Wixom Assembly Plant caused the air bag warning lamp to illuminate due to a "no ground" fault. Further examination revealed that none of the required four screws had been installed to hold the circuit board in the housing. Two additional modules with the same concern were located at the Wixom Plant on September 21, 2000. A review of stock at the affected plants and the supplier's subsequent investigation revealed the existence of the assembly concern noted in paragraph (c) (5), above. Ford is not aware of any reports alleging restraint system malfunction in crashes due to this condition, or of any reports of fires, accidents or injuries related to this condition.

573.5 (c) (8)

Ford will notify owners of record of the affected vehicles to return them to dealers to have the affected RCM or crash sensors inspected and, if necessary, replaced. There will be no charge to owners for this service. It is currently anticipated that owner notification will occur on or before the week of December 18, 2000.

573.5 (c) (9)

Ford does not plan to make a public statement concerning this action. A copy of notification letters to dealers and owners from Ford Customer Service Division will be forwarded when available.

573.5 (c) (11)

For administrative reasons, Ford has decided to assign three campaign numbers to this action. 00S52 is being assigned to cover those vehicles with a known suspect RCM or satellite crash sensor (either front or side) based on the recording of module serial numbers at assembly plants. 00S53 is being assigned to cover those vehicles that may have a suspect front crash sensor installed during vehicle assembly and that requires the serial number of the sensor to be inspected and compared to the suspect list. 00S54 is being assigned to cover those vehicles that may have had a suspect RCM installed as part of safety recall 00S26

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00S52/ 00S53/ 00S54

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(NHTSA recall number 00V270) and that require the RCM serial number to be inspected and compared to the suspect list.

Sincerely,



L. W. Camp

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