

Ford Motor Company
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OFFICE
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

James P. Vondale, Director
Automotive Safety Office
Environmental & Safety Engineering

May 13, 2004

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

04V-229
(3 pages)

Dear Mr. Weinstein:


Subject: Ford Motor Company (Ford) Recall No. 04C07 - Certain 2004 model year F-250 and F-350 Lariat and King Ranch models requiring LT275/65R18E tires.

Summary

- Ford Action - Ford is conducting a voluntary compliance recall involving certain 2004 model year F-250 and F-350 Lariat and King Ranch models to inspect the tires and, if necessary, replace tires that are not identified as load range E tires.
- Number of Vehicles Involved - Approximately 4,858 vehicles in the United States and Federated Territories.
- Description of Non-Compliance - Ford's tire supplier inadvertently included LT275/65R18 load range "C" tires in shipments of 21,000 tires to the Ford Kentucky Truck Plant (KTP). The tire shipments to KTP were intended to include only load range "E" tires. Load range "C" tires do not have sufficient load capacity for the stated "Gross Axle Weight Rating" (GAWR) on the potentially affected vehicles. FMVSS 120 Section S5.3.1 requires that the tire label indicate the tire size and recommended cold inflation pressure such that the sum of the load ratings of the tires on each axle is appropriate for the GAWR on the label. Because of the incorrect tire shipments, KTP may have inadvertently equipped some of the affected vehicles with an incorrect load range tire, resulting in incorrect tire load ratings for the stated vehicle axle GAWR. Additionally, the tire may be inflated above the DOT listed inflation pressure.
- Service Program - Ford notified dealers to stop demonstrating or delivering the affected vehicles until vehicle inspections are performed and tires replaced as appropriate. Ford will notify owners and instruct them to take their vehicles to a Ford or Lincoln-Mercury dealer for tire inspection and, if necessary, tire replacement.

Attached is the detailed information required by the applicable portions of 49 CFR Part 573 - Defect and Non-Compliance Information Report.

Sincerely,


James P. Vondale
Attachment



49 CFR Part 573 - NON-COMPLIANCE INFORMATION REPORT
04C07- 2004 Model Year Ford F-250 and F-350 Lariat and King Ranch Models

Pursuant to Part 573 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Defect and Noncompliance Reports, Ford Motor Company (Ford) submits the following information concerning a potential noncompliance to the requirements of Section S5.3.1 of FMVSS 120 for certain 2004 model year F-250 and F-350 Lariat and King Ranch models.

573.6 (c) (2) - Potentially Affected Vehicles

Certain F-250 and F-350 Lariat and King Ranch models built from January 15, 2004 through May 4, 2004 at the Kentucky Truck Assembly Plant are potentially affected.

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 (1-800-392-3873) or by contacting a local Ford dealer who can obtain specific information regarding the vehicles from the Ford On-line Automotive Service Information System (OASIS) database.

573.6 (c) (3) - Estimated Population of Vehicles Potentially Affected

Approximately 4,858 vehicles in the United States and Federated Territories.

573.6 (c) (4) - Estimated Percentage of Affected Vehicles with the Condition

Unknown.

573.6 (c) (5) - Description of Non-Compliance

Ford's tire supplier inadvertently included LT275/65R18 load range "C" tires in shipments of 21,000 tires to the Ford Kentucky Truck Plant (KTP). The tire shipments to KTP were intended to include only load range "E" tires. Load range "C" tires do not have sufficient load capacity for the stated "Gross Axle Weight Rating" (GAWR) on the potentially affected vehicles. FMVSS 120 Section S5.3.1 requires that the tire label indicate the tire size and recommended cold inflation pressure such that the sum of the load ratings of the tires on each axle is appropriate for the GAWR on the label. Because of the incorrect tire shipments, KTP may have inadvertently equipped some of the affected vehicles with an incorrect load range tire, resulting in incorrect tire load ratings for the stated vehicle axle GAWR. Additionally, the tire may be inflated above the DOT listed inflation pressure.

As of May 6, 2004 there are no known reports of accidents or injuries attributed to this condition.

573.6 (c) (7) - Basis of Non-Compliance Determination

On May 3, 2004, Ford was notified by a dealer that the sum of the load capacity for the front tires on an F-Super Duty vehicle did not equal or exceed the listed GAWR for the axle, as identified on the certification label. An investigation was undertaken, including inspection of vehicle labels, review of production records, and analysis of computer records, to confirm the observed condition and to determine vehicles potentially affected. It was determined that the supplier inadvertently included load range "C" tires within the shipments of the required load range "E" tires to KTP and that some vehicles were inadvertently equipped with those Load range "C" tires.

573.6 (c) (8) Service Program

Ford notified dealers to stop demonstrating or delivering the affected vehicles until vehicle inspections are performed and tires replaced as appropriate. Ford will notify owners and instruct them to take their vehicles to a Ford or Lincoln-Mercury dealer for tire inspection and, if necessary, tire replacement.

There will be no charge to owners for this service. Mailing of owner notification letters will begin May 21, 2004 and be completed by May 21, 2004.

In accordance with Part 573.13 (d)(1), Ford is excluding reimbursement for costs incurred by owners for repair of this problem as Ford's original warranty program would have provided for a free repair of the problem.

573.6 (c) (9) -- Press statement and Dealer/Owner Letters

Ford does not plan to make a public statement concerning the subject matter of this action. A copy of the Notification letters to dealers and owners from Ford will be forwarded when available.

573.6 (c) (11) -- Recall Number

Ford has assigned recall number 04C07 to this action.