

Ford Motor Company

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DEFECTS
INFORMATION

04V-327
(3 pages)

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

July 6, 2004

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

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

Subject: Ford Recall No. 04S15 – Certain 2003 model year Ford F-250 through F-550 pick-up trucks and Excursion vehicles equipped with 6.0L engine for ground stud torque.

Summary

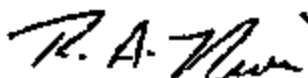
- **Ford Action** -- Ford is conducting a voluntary safety recall involving certain 2003 model year Ford F-250 through F-550 pick-up trucks and Excursion vehicles equipped with 6.0L diesel engines to replace the engine ground stud and inspect the radio suppression strap and adjacent components for damage and replacement, if necessary.
- **Number of Vehicles Involved** – Approximately 83,687 vehicles in the United States and Federalized Territories.
- **Affect on Vehicle Operation** – The engine ground attachment may be loose. A loose battery ground may produce a high resistance ground path. If the resistance is sufficient the electrical current can seek an alternative path with lower resistance. The radio suppression strap is a path that provides lower resistance, but if the condition occurs, may carry more current than intended. In some instances the strap may heat and potentially smoke or melt or ignite adjacent components.

There have been no reports of accidents or injuries related to this condition. There have been 35 reported fires.

- **Service Procedure** – Owners will be instructed to take their vehicles to a Ford or Lincoln-Mercury dealer to have the engine ground stud replaced and the radio suppression strap and adjacent components inspected for damage and replaced, if necessary.

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 – DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT
04S15 – 2003 MODEL YEAR FORD F-250 THROUGH F-550 PICK UP TRUCK VEHICLES
AND 2003 EXCURSION VEHICLES WITH 6.0L ENIGNE.

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 recall action that it is voluntarily initiating.

573.6 (c) (2) – Potentially Affected Vehicles

Vehicles potentially affected are 2003 model year Ford F-250 through F-550 pick-up trucks and Excursion vehicles built at the Kentucky Truck Plant (KTP) from December 1, 2002 through March 31, 2003, as identified by specific VIN numbers.

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 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 83,687 vehicles in the United States and Federalized Territories.

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

Unknown.

573.6 (c) (5) – Description of the Defect

The engine ground attachment may be loose. A loose battery ground may produce a high resistance ground path. If the resistance is sufficient the electrical current can seek an alternative path with lower resistance. The radio suppression strap is a path that provides lower resistance, but if the condition occurs, may carry more current than intended. In some instances the strap may heat and potentially smoke or melt or ignite adjacent components.

573.6 (c) (6) – Chronology of Events

On February 5, 2004 the Ford Critical Concern Review Group was notified of reports of smoking and alleged fires in the right hand cowl top area of the vehicle. Warranty data was presented to engineering for review and analysis. Based on reviews of symptoms and dealer technician comments, during the preliminary investigation, it was determined that the negative battery cable to engine block attachment was loose. Engineering subsequently conducted a series of analyses on the attachment joint including a review of torque data, investigation of the material quality of the ground stud and engine block, cycle testing of the attachment joint and a review of vehicle design and determined that a loose ground attachment at the engine block may cause electrical current from the battery to seek an alternate path through the radio suppression strap during cold weather engine cranking at start up. If the condition occurs, the suppression strap may carry more current than intended. Further analysis showed that the excess current through the strap could cause melting, smoking, or ignition of adjacent components. As of June 1, 2004, Ford has identified 138 reports of loose battery grounds of which 60 allege smoking or melting of components and 35 allege fires. There are no accidents and injuries attributed to this condition.

573.6 (c) (8) – Service Program

Dealers will be instructed to replace the engine ground stud and inspect the radio suppression strap and adjacent components for damage and replacement if necessary. There will be no charge to owners for this service. Mailing of owner notification letters will begin on July 22, 2004 and be completed on July 22, 2004. Ford's general reimbursement plan for the cost of remedies paid for by vehicle owners prior to notification of a safety recall was provided to the agency on February 28, 2003.

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

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

573.6(c) (11) – Recall Number

Ford has assigned recall number 04S15 to this action.

573.13 (c) (2) - Ending Date for Reimbursement Eligibility

The ending date for reimbursement eligibility for cost of remedies paid for by vehicle owners per Ford's general reimbursement plan is August 1, 2004.