

Ford Motor Company

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(3 pages)
DEFECTS
SECTION

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. 04S18 – Certain 2004 model year Ford Taurus, Thunderbird and Mercury Sable vehicles equipped with power adjustable seats – Inadequate upper support assembly welds.

Summary

- Ford Action – Ford is conducting a voluntary safety recall involving certain 2004 model year Ford Taurus, Thunderbird and Mercury Sable vehicles to replace the power seat upper support assemblies.
- Number of Vehicles Involved – Approximately 24,277 vehicles in the United States and Federalized Territories.
- Affect on Vehicle Operation – A seat supplier may have produced certain power seats subassemblies with inadequate welds. These welds attach the track recliner bracket to the lower support bracket - together these two components comprise the upper support assembly. If a completed power seat assembly is installed in one of the subject vehicles it may not perform as intended during loading, such as could occur during a vehicle collision.

There have been no reports related to this condition on vehicles in service.

- Service Procedure – Owners will be instructed to take their vehicles to a Ford or Lincoln-Mercury dealer to have the upper support assembly replaced in the power seat(s).

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

Sincerely,

J. P. Vondale

James P. Vondale

Attachment



49 CFR Part 573 – DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT
04S18 – 2004 MODEL YEAR FORD TAURUS, THUNDERBIRD AND
MERCURY SABLE VEHICLES

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 2004 model year Ford Taurus and Mercury Sable vehicles equipped with power adjustable seat assemblies built at the Atlanta Assembly Plant (AAP) from November 17, 2003 through January 14, 2004; 2004 model year Ford Taurus and Mercury Sable vehicles built at the Chicago Assembly Plant (CAP) from November 17, 2003 through January 15, 2004; and 2004 model year Ford Thunderbird vehicles equipped with power adjustable seat assemblies built at the Wixom Assembly Plant (WAP) from December 15, 2003 through January 20, 2004 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

24,277 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 Tier II supplier for components used in the power seat track subassembly may have produced a limited number of upper support assemblies in which the welds that attached the track recliner bracket to the lower support bracket did not meet specifications. If the upper support assembly is installed in a completed seat assembly, the seat system may not perform as intended during loading, such as could occur during a vehicle collision. There have been no reports related to this condition on vehicles in service. Accordingly, there have been no reported accidents or injuries attributed to this condition.

573.6 (c) (6) – Chronology of Events

On January 13, 2004 the CAP and the AAP notified engineering that two power seat tracks had failed squeak and rattle tests performed at these assembly plants. On-site investigations revealed a cold #4 weld that attached the track recliner bracket to the lower support bracket sub-components. A Stop Ship (#1002) was issued on January 13, 2004. On January 15, 2004 the

573.6 (c) (6) -- Chronology of Events (Continued)

Tier II supplier responsible for assembling these two sub-components identified that there was a potential for inadequate #2, 3 and 4 welds. A subsequent review of the supplier's production data, identified that a power supply/controller failure on November 15, 2003 resulted in a change in production equipment that could produce inadequate welds at the locations identified above. During February and March 2004, Ford initiated an inspection process of vehicles quarantined from the suspect time period to determine if seats with inadequate welds were used in vehicle assembly. Based on subsequent testing and analysis conducted in April 2004, Ford determined that power track seat assemblies with inadequate welds at the #2, 3 and 4 positions (or any combination thereof) will not perform as intended during loading. Searches of field performance data located no reports or claims related to this issue. Accordingly, there are no known accidents or injuries attributed to this condition.

573.6 (c) (8) -- Service Program

Dealers will be instructed to replace the upper support assembly on all power track seats installed on these vehicles. There will be no charge to owners for this service. Mailing of owner notification letters will begin and be completed on July 20, 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 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 04S18 to this action.

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

Refunds are not authorized for this program.