

*Ford Motor Company*

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DEPARTMENT OF  
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

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Environmental & Safety Engineering

November 7, 2005

Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance  
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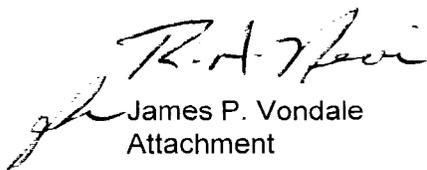
Subject: Supplement to Ford Recall No. 05S27 - Certain 2003-2005 Model Year Ford Focus Four Door, Five Door, and Wagon Vehicles, excluding vehicles previously included in Safety Recall 05S27 - Rear Door Latches.

Summary

- Ford Action – Ford is supplementing its prior recall 05S27 to add 2003-2004 and certain 2005 Focus four door, five door, and wagon vehicles to address rear door latch corrosion that may affect proper operation of the latch. There are no accidents or injuries attributed to door openings in these vehicles.
- Number of Vehicles Involved - Approximately 231,075 vehicles originally sold or currently registered in Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia.
- Effect on Vehicle Operation – Rear door latches on 2003-2004 and certain 2005 model year Ford Focus vehicles in recognized high-corrosion states may experience corrosion in the pawl pivot area. A customer may experience difficulty opening or closing a rear door, and eventually the rear door may not latch properly. If not latched properly, the door may open while the vehicle is in motion.
- Service Procedure – Owners will be instructed to take their vehicles to a Ford or Lincoln-Mercury dealer to have a lower rocker seal affixed to the door and to have the rear door latches evaluated. A latch that passes the evaluation will be lubricated to prevent future corrosion. A latch that does not pass the evaluation will be replaced at no cost to the customer.

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

Sincerely,

  
James P. Vondale  
Attachment



49 CFR Part 573 – DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT  
05S27 – CERTAIN 2003-2005 MODEL YEAR FORD FOCUS FOUR DOOR, FIVE DOOR, AND  
WAGON VEHICLES – REAR DOOR LATCHES, EXCLUDING VEHICLE PREVIOUSLY  
INCLUDED IN SAFETY RECALL 05S27

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 supplementing that previously provided concerning a safety recall action that it is voluntarily initiating.

573.6 (c) (2) – Potentially Affected Vehicles

The vehicles potentially affected are 2003-2004 and certain 2005 model year Ford Focus four door, five door and wagon vehicles originally sold or currently registered in certain high-corrosion states and built at the Wayne Assembly plant from May 22, 2002 through January 26, 2005, and at the Hermosillo Assembly Plant from June 3, 2002 through January 26, 2005 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 231,075 vehicles in the United States and Federalized Territories.

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

Any vehicle that is subjected to long-term use in the corrosive environment that may be encountered in the traditional high-corrosion states without adequate lubrication service may experience the condition.

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

Ford's analysis indicates that a build up of corrosion at the pawl pivot area of the rear door latch can cause a binding condition of the pawl that may affect proper engagement of the pawl into the catch. The customer may experience difficulty opening or closing a rear door, and eventually the rear door may not latch properly. If not latched properly the door may open while a vehicle is in motion. Analysis of data and review of latches from vehicles has shown that the condition occurs only on vehicles subject to long-term exposure to a corrosive environment. Vehicles exhibiting this condition were originally sold or currently registered in high-corrosion states.

573.6 (c) (5) – Description of the Defect (cont'd)

The presence of corrosion in the latch results from two factors in combination as follows:

1. The primary rear door seals allow contamination to enter the door margin at the lower rocker margin and deposit on the latch.
2. The plating (hexavalent chrome) of the components of the latch does not provide adequate protection in the recognized corrosion areas of North America and Canada. During vehicle operation, contamination (water and salt) deposits on the latch components, creating a corrosive "paste". The paste does not wash through the latch, but remains and corrosively attacks the surfaces of the latch components.

573.6 (c) (6) – Chronology of Events

In April 2004, NHTSA opened a Preliminary Evaluation investigation (PE04-033) into allegations that one or both of the rear door latches were not latching, resulting in unintended opening of the rear doors on 2000 model year Ford Focus vehicles.

In September 2004, NHTSA upgraded its investigation to an Engineering Analysis (EA04-023) concerning allegations of any failure, malfunction or otherwise unsatisfactory performance of the door latches of the rear passenger doors on 2000-2005 model year Ford Focus vehicles. As a result of our findings in the PE and EA investigations, Ford initiated a voluntary safety recall (05S27) involving 2000-2002 model year vehicles in January 2005. At that time we committed to monitor reports in later model year vehicles using latches of the same design.

In October 2005, Ford identified nine warranty claims, 14 owner reports, and four Vehicle Owner Questionnaires for 2003-2005 model year four door, five door and wagon Focus vehicles with allegations of unintended rear door opening while a vehicle was in motion. The investigation of these reports determined that rear door latches on 2003-2004 and certain 2005 model year Focus vehicles produced through January 26, 2005 may be susceptible to corrosion in the pawl pivot area similar to the rear door latches on the 2000-2002 model year Focus vehicles originally included in Recall No. 05S27.

573.6 (c) (8) – Service Program

Owners of vehicles originally sold or currently registered in Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin will be instructed to take their vehicles to a Ford or Lincoln-Mercury dealer to have a lower rocker seal added to the door, if not so equipped, and to have the rear door latches evaluated. A latch that passes the evaluation will be lubricated to prevent future corrosion. A latch that does not pass the evaluation will be replaced at no cost to the customer. In addition, a sticker will be affixed to the rear doors advising the customer to use Ford recommended lubricants. There will be no charge to owners for this service.

Mailing of owner notification letters will begin on November 18, 2005 and be completed on or before November 19, 2005. 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. Dealer notification letters will be mailed on November 7, 2005.

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 05S27 to this action.

573.13 (c) (2) – Ending Date for Reimbursement

The ending date for reimbursement eligibility for cost of remedies paid for by vehicle owners per Ford's general reimbursement plan is November 30, 2005.