



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



Fairlane Plaza South
330 Town Center Drive
Dearborn, MI 48126-2738 USA

February 4, 2008

Mr. Daniel C. Smith
Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE/Room W45-231
Washington, DC 20590

08V-058
(3 pages)

Dear Mr. Smith:

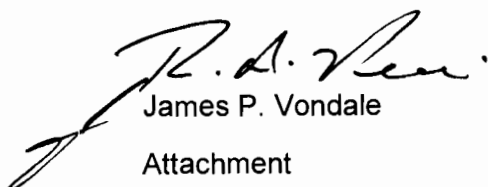
Subject: Ford Motor Company (Ford) Recall No. 08S03 - Certain 2007 and 2008 Model Year Ford Expedition and Lincoln Navigator vehicles side door interior door handles.

Summary

- Ford Action - Ford is conducting a voluntary safety recall involving certain 2007 and 2008 model year Ford Expedition and Lincoln Navigator vehicles to replace all side door interior door handle springs.
- Number of Vehicles Involved - Approximately 123,632 vehicles in the United States and federalized territories.
- Effect on Vehicle Operation - The door handle housing embossment retaining the bottom of the interior door handle spring may fracture during normal customer usage resulting in insufficient spring force to return the handle to the fully closed position. The door latch remains fully engaged with this condition. The handle may be loose causing a rattle or noise and the handle may not return to the fully closed position. This condition may also provide a delayed resistance when actuating the handle prior to opening the door. Although Ford has not conducted vehicle tests for this condition, depending on the spring load force and handle position, the inertial loads experienced by the interior door handle may cause the door latch to open during a side impact crash. Ford, in an abundance of caution, will replace all interior side door handle springs with a new design spring. There are no reports of accidents or injuries related to this condition.
- Service Procedure - Owners will be notified and instructed to take their vehicles to a Ford or Lincoln/Mercury dealer to replace the interior handle spring on all side doors.

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
08S03 - 2007 AND 2008 MODEL YEAR FORD EXPEDITION AND LINCOLN NAVIGATOR
VEHICLES - INTERIOR DOOR HANDLE SPRING

Pursuant to Part 573 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Defect and Non-compliance 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 certain 2007 and 2008 model year Ford Expedition and Lincoln Navigator vehicles built at the Michigan Truck Plant (MTP) from March 3, 2006 through August 9, 2007.

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 or Lincoln Mercury 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 123,632 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 door handle housing embossment retaining the bottom of the interior door handle spring on all side doors may fracture during normal customer usage resulting in insufficient spring force to return the handle to the fully closed position. The door latch remains fully engaged with this condition. The handle may be loose causing a rattle or noise and the handle may not return to the fully closed position. This condition may also provide a delayed resistance when actuating the handle prior to opening the door. Although Ford has not conducted vehicle tests for this condition, depending on the spring load force and handle position, the inertial loads experienced by the interior door handle may cause the door latch to open during a side impact crash. Ford, in an abundance of caution, will replace all interior side door handle springs with a new design spring. There are no reports of accidents or injuries related to this condition.

573.6 (c) (6) - Chronology of Events

On June 14, 2007, the Plant Vehicle Team at the Michigan Truck Plant was notified of warranty reports for loose feeling or rattle of the interior door handles on the 2007 Expedition and Navigator. On July 24, 2007, the supplier of the interior door handle provided a summary of warranty reports indicating there were 206 field reports related to the interior door handle for the 2007 and 2008 model years. Engineering reviewed the data and based on their analysis additional monthly field reports and field return parts were gathered to determine if a defect trend

existed. Engineering conducted data analysis and a series of evaluations of field return and current production parts, part design changes, process reviews, material quality analysis and material testing of the spring, the door handle and housing plastic. Ford has identified 2,383 field reports for loose interior door handles, does not fully retract, or free travel before engaging the latch to open, as of January 9, 2008. There are no reports of "unintended door unlatching", "failed to latch," accidents or injuries.

573.6 (c) (8) - Service Program

Owners will be notified and instructed to take their vehicles to a Ford or Lincoln/Mercury dealer to replace the interior handle spring on all side doors. There will be no charge to owners for this service.

Mailing of owner notification letters will begin on February 14, 2008, and be completed on February 15, 2008. Notification to Dealers will occur on February 5, 2008.

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

573.6 (c) (10) - 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 will be forwarded to the agency when available.

573.6 (c) (11) - Recall Number

Ford has assigned recall number 08S03 to this action.