



10V-385
(3 Pages)
Amended Defect Report

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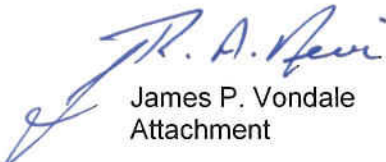
Subject: Supplement to Ford Motor Company (Ford) Recall No. 10S13 - Certain 1998 through 2003 Model Year Ford Windstar Vehicles Rear Axle Cracking

Summary

- Ford Action – Ford is supplementing its prior recall 10S13 to add certain vehicles to the program. Recent analysis of parts and information from the field has shown that the revised heat treated axle used 1) on 2003 model year vehicles not included in the original 10S13 action may still have the potential for cracks due to corrosion related stress, and 2) that vehicles operated in Utah may also be exposed to the same combination of factors that can make them susceptible to cracks from stress related corrosion. Therefore, Ford will add these two vehicle populations to recall 10S13.
- Number of Vehicles Involved – Ford estimates that there are approximately 29,900 currently registered vehicles that were either originally sold in or are registered in Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.
- Effect on Vehicle Operation – A completely fractured rear axle may lead to a loss of vehicle control. There may be little or no warning to the operator before a cracked rear axle completely fractures.
- Service Procedure – Owners will be notified and instructed to take their vehicles to a Ford or Lincoln/Mercury dealer for an inspection of the rear axle. Owners of vehicles without axle cracking will have reinforcement brackets installed to extend axle durability in the presence of corrosion. Owners who have vehicles with cracked axles will either be offered a repair or alternative transportation until parts become available.

Ford is voluntarily taking this action as a safety recall. Also, Ford is extending the free remedy offer to all vehicle owners in this population, including those vehicles that are beyond the statutorily required free remedy period. The detailed information required by the applicable portions of 49 CFR Part 573 - Defect and Non-Compliance Information Report is attached.

Sincerely,


James P. Vondale
Attachment



49 CFR PART 573 – DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT
10S13 – 1998 THROUGH 2003 MODEL YEAR FORD WINDSTAR VEHICLES
REAR AXLE CRACKING

Pursuant to Part 573 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Defect and Non-Compliance Reports, Ford Motor Company (Ford) submits the following information supplementing a safety recall action that had previously been voluntarily initiated.

573.6 (c) (2) – Potentially Affected Vehicles

Vehicles potentially affected are 1) certain 1998 through 2003 model year Ford Windstar vehicles built at the Oakville Assembly Plant (OAP) from September 1, 1997, through July 3, 2003, that are currently registered and that were either originally sold in or are registered in Utah, and 2) 2003 model year Windstar vehicles built at the Oakville Assembly Plant (OAP) from March 1, 2003, through July 3, 2003, that are currently registered and that were either originally sold in or that are registered in Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

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 (1-866-436-7332) 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 29,900 currently registered vehicles in the United States and Federalized Territories are potentially affected.

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

Unknown.

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

After many years of service on vehicles operated in the high corrosion areas of the United States, corrosion can weaken the rear axle, making it susceptible to torsional stress. There is a small risk that the combined effects of corrosion and stress can lead to cracks which, if undetected, can propagate and result in a complete fracture of the axle. A completely fractured axle can affect vehicle handling and increase the risk of a crash.

573.6 (c) (6) – Chronology of Events

On May 13, 2010, the NHTSA opened an investigation (PE10-016) on rear axle beam failures on 1999 through 2003 model year Ford Windstar vehicles. Ford provided its response to the agency's information request on July 20, 2010, and has continued to work with the agency as well as conducted further engineering analysis on parts gathered from the field. On August 19, 2010, Ford's Field Review Committee (FRC) reviewed the issue and approved a field action.

Analysis of parts returned from the vehicles in service subsequent to initiation of recall 10S13 found that the revised heat treated axles used on 2003 model year vehicles built after February 28, 2003, (not included in the original action) may still have the potential for cracks due to corrosion related stress. In addition, analysis of field reports for vehicles operated in Utah also found that they are exposed to the combination of factors that led to the original recall that can make them susceptible to cracking from stress related corrosion. Therefore, on November 19, 2010, Ford's FRC approved the addition of these two vehicle populations to recall 10S13.

573.6 (c) (8) – Service Program

Owners of vehicles originally sold or currently registered in the high corrosion areas will be notified and instructed to take their vehicles to a Ford or Lincoln/Mercury dealer for an inspection of the rear axle. Vehicles with no signs of rear axle cracking will have reinforcement brackets installed either immediately or at a later date if parts are not available. The reinforcement brackets will extend axle durability in the presence of corrosion. Owners who have vehicles with cracked axles will either be offered a repair or alternative transportation until parts become available. There will be no charge to owners for any of these services.

Owner notification letters will be mailed the week of December 6, 2010. 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, 2009. Notification to dealers will occur on November 30, 2010.

573.6 (c) (10) – Press Statement and Dealer/Owner Letters

National media attention is likely as with most Ford recalls. Ford will provide public comments when requested. A news release will not be issued. 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 10S13 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 December 31, 2010.