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By delia.lopez at 9:18 am, Feb 02, 2011

11V-063  
(3 pages)



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

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

January 28, 2011

Mr. Claude H. Harris  
Acting Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Room W45-231  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Smith:

Subject: Ford Motor Company (Ford) Recall No. 11C15 - Certain 2011 Model Year Ford Explorer  
Second Row 60% Seat - Center Recliner Mechanism

Summary

- Ford Action - Ford is conducting a voluntary compliance recall involving certain 2011 model year Ford Explorer vehicles to replace the second row 60% seat - center recliner mechanism.
- Number of Vehicles Involved - Approximately 1,658 vehicles in the United States and federalized territories.
- Description of Non-Compliance - Ford's seat supplier shipped second row 60% seats with manual recliner mechanisms that may have components that are out of dimensional specification. Some affected seats with a manual recliner mechanism that are out of specification may not fully comply with the requirements of Section S.4.2.c. of FMVSS 207. As of January 21, 2011, Ford is not aware of any reports of this condition on vehicles in customer service.
- Service Program - Dealers will be notified to stop demonstrating or delivering the affected vehicles until they are repaired. Ford will notify owners and instruct them to take their vehicle to a Ford or Lincoln/Mercury dealer to have the second row 60% seats with manual recliner mechanism replaced.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. A. Vondale".

James P. Vondale

Attachment



49 CFR PART 573 - NON-COMPLIANCE INFORMATION REPORT  
11C15 - 2011 MODEL YEAR FORD EXPLORER VEHICLES WITH SECOND ROW  
60% SEAT CENTER RECLINER MECHANISM

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 concerning a potential non-compliance to the requirements of Section S.4.2 of FMVSS 207, for certain 2011 model year Ford Explorer vehicles.

573.6 (c) (2) - Potentially Affected Vehicles

Certain 2011 Explorer Vehicles built from July 15, 2010, through December 13, 2010, at the Chicago Assembly plant are potentially affected.

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.

The seat assemblies for the affected vehicles are assembled by Lear Seating at their facility in the United States.

The Lear contact person is:

Director of Quality  
Jeff Hill  
248-447-1374

Lear Corporation  
21557 Telegraph Rd.  
Southfield, MI 48034

573.6 (c) (3) - Estimated Population of Vehicles Potentially Affected

Approximately 1,658 vehicles in the United States and federalized territories.

573.6 (c) (4) - Estimated percentage of Affected Vehicles with the Condition

Unknown.

573.6 (c) (5) - Description of Non-Compliance

Ford's seat supplier shipped second row 60% seats with manual recliner mechanisms that may have components that are out of dimensional specification. Some affected seats with a manual recliner mechanism that are out of specification may not fully comply with the requirements of Section S.4.2.c. of FMVSS 207. As of January 21, 2011, Ford is not aware of any reports of this condition on vehicles in customer service.

573.6 (c) (7) - Basis of Non-Compliance Determination

On December 14, 2010, at the Chicago Assembly Plant, a 2011 model year Explorer was identified as having a noise in the second Row 60% seat. This seat was removed from the unit



and returned to the seat supplier. Upon inspection of the returned seat there was unexpected observable movement of the center recliner/seatback during manual forward loading. On December 15, 2010, a stop ship was issued at the Chicago Assembly Plant for Explorers with second row 60% seats.

A further investigation was conducted that included review of warranty reports, supplier process reports, dimensional analysis of seat component parts, and supplier equipment capability to determine cause. It was determined that the sector plate to guide plate gap in the manual recliner mechanism was out of dimensional specification. Additional reviews of manufacturing records within the supply chain found that a sub-supplier to the seat supplier had not maintained adequate dimensional controls when stamping certain sector and guide plates. Static bench load testing was conducted between December 17, 2010, and December 21, 2010, on recliner mechanisms that had sector/guide plate gaps that were in dimensional specification and out of specification. It was determined that some recliners that were out of dimensional specification did not meet Ford Specified loading. On January 11, 2011, the Compliance Review Committee reviewed the data.

On January 13, 2011, a Technical Review Committee was held to review engineering and production data.

On January 21, 2011, the Field Review Committee reviewed the issue and approved a field action. Although testing for FMVSS 207 had not been conducted, it was determined that recliner mechanisms with out of dimensional specification sector/guide plate gaps may not meet the requirements of FMVSS 207.

#### 573.6 (c) (8) - Service Program

Dealers will be notified to stop demonstrating or delivering the affected vehicles until they are repaired. Ford will notify owners and instruct them to take their vehicle to a Ford or Lincoln/Mercury dealer to have the second row 60% seats with manual recliner mechanism replaced.

Mailing of owner notification letters will occur the week of February 14, 2011. Notification to Dealers occurred on January 31, 2011.

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

National media attention is likely as with most Ford recalls when posted to NHTSA's safecar.gov website. 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 11C15 to this action.