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January 4, 2012

Ms. Nancy Lewis
Associate Administrator for Enforcement
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Room W45-306
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Ms. Lewis:

Subject: Ford Motor Company (Ford) Recall No. 11S26 – Certain 2011 Model Year Ford F-650 trucks with Meritor, Inc. (Meritor) MFS-08 front axles for insufficient torque on bolts that retain the steering arm to the steering spindle or knuckle

Summary

- Ford Action – Ford is providing this notice of a defect in accordance with 49 CFR Part 573.3(f) based on a Meritor determination of a defect related to certain MFS-08 front axles for insufficient torque on bolts that retain the steering arm to the steering spindle or knuckle. Certain 2011 model year Ford F-650 trucks are potentially affected.
- Number of Vehicles Involved – Approximately 36 vehicles in the United States and federalized territories are potentially affected.
- Effect on Vehicle Operation – Ford was notified by Meritor on December 6, 2011, that it had made a determination that a safety defect exists in certain MFS-08 front axles supplied to multiple original equipment vehicle manufacturers, including Ford. In a November 10, 2011, letter to the agency, Meritor indicated that certain suspect axles were produced with an alternate process that may have resulted in insufficient torqueing of the bolts that retain the steering arm to the knuckle. According to Meritor, “Low torque can result in the steering arm loosening and exhibiting steering play. Further loss of torque may result in bolt fatigue and fracture and/or arm separation, thereby potentially resulting in loss of vehicle control.” Ford Motor Company has not independently evaluated the effect on the vehicle; however, Ford concurs with Meritor’s recommendation. Ford is not aware of any reports relating to this condition on these vehicles.
- Service Procedure – Owners will be notified by mail and instructed to take their vehicle(s) to a Ford dealer to inspect the steer arm to knuckle gap and either re-torque the bolts or replace the knuckle and bolts, as appropriate, based on Meritor’s service instruction TP1206. Ford will notified dealers on January 6, 2012, to stop demonstrating or delivering the affected vehicles.

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

Sincerely,

Steven M. Kenner
Attachments



49 CFR PART 573 – DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT
11S26 – CERTAIN 2011 MODEL YEAR FORD F-650 TRUCKS WITH MERITOR, INC. MFS-08
FRONT AXLES FOR INSUFFICIENT TORQUE ON BOLTS THAT RETAIN THE STEERING
ARM TO THE STEERING SPINDLE OR KNUCKLE

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 2011 Ford F-650 trucks built at the Escobedo Assembly Plant from February 2, 2011 through February 17, 2011.

Ford vehicles are not produced in VIN order and we typically cannot provide VIN specific information. However, in this instance Ford is able to provide the specific VIN list – see Attachment II.

The axles for the affected vehicles were assembled in Mexico by Meritor, Inc. (Meritor) in their facility located at:

Boulevard Nexus, ADN
#2505, Cienega de Flores,
Nuevo Leon, 65550,
Monterrey, Mexico

The Meritor Contact person is:

Charles Smith
Director of Quality, North America
Meritor, Inc.
2135 West Maple Road
Troy, Michigan 48084-7121 USA
800-535-5560

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

Approximately 36 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

Ford was notified by Meritor on December 6, 2011, that it had made a determination that a safety defect exists in certain MFS-08 front axles supplied to multiple original equipment vehicle manufacturers, including Ford. In a November 10, 2011, letter to the agency, Meritor indicated that certain suspect axles were produced with an alternate process that may have resulted in insufficient torquing of the bolts that retain the steering arm to the knuckle. According to

Meritor, "Low torque can result in the steering arm loosening and exhibiting steering play. Further loss of torque may result in bolt fatigue and fracture and/or arm separation, thereby potentially resulting in loss of vehicle control." Ford Motor Company has not independently evaluated the effect on the vehicle; however, Ford concurs with Meritor's recommendation. Ford is not aware of any reports relating to this condition on these vehicles.

573.6 (c) (6) – Chronology of Events

Ford received a letter from Meritor on December 6, notifying Ford of their submission of a defect notification to NHTSA, (NHTSA recall 11E-048) concerning certain MFS-08 axles that were produced with an alternate process and are believed to have insufficient torque of the bolts that retain the steering arm. Ford then proceeded to request serial numbers of axles from Meritor and match those numbers to Ford vehicle VINs.

On December 20, 2011, Ford's Field Review Committee (FRC) reviewed the issue and approved a field action.

573.6 (c) (8) – Service Program

Owners will be notified by mail and instructed to take their vehicle(s) to a Ford dealer to inspect the steering arm to knuckle gap and either re-torque the bolts or replace the knuckle and bolts, as appropriate, based on Meritor's service instruction TP1206. There will be no charge to owners for this service.

Mailing of owner notification letters will occur during the week of January 18, 2012. Notification to dealers will occur on January 6, 2012.

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.

Ford will forward a copy of the notification letters to dealers and owners to the agency when available.

573.6 (c) (11) – Recall Number

Ford has assigned recall number 11S26 to this action.