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Automotive Safety Office
Sustainability, Environment & Safety Engineering
April 30, 2012

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330 Town Center Drive
Dearborn, MI 48126-2738 USA

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. 12S31 – Certain 2012 model year F-150 vehicles
Occupant Classification System calibration

Summary

- Ford Action – Ford is conducting a voluntary safety recall involving certain 2012 model year F-150 vehicles with an Occupant Classification System Module (OCSM) that may not be calibrated correctly.
- Number of Vehicles Involved – Approximately 101 vehicles in the United States and federalized territories are potentially affected. Ford distributed approximately eight service parts to dealers which may be potentially affected.
- Effect on Vehicle Operation – A limited number of 2012 F-150 vehicles may not have had their OCSM software properly updated prior to release from the Dearborn Truck Plant (DTP). Under certain, rare driving conditions, vehicles equipped with the incorrect software may temporarily experience an inaccurate occupant classification which may or may not result in an unexpected Passenger Airbag Disable Light function or belt/minder system actuation. Ford has not received any field reports for this issue.
- Service Procedure – Owners will be notified by mail and instructed to take their vehicle(s) to a Ford or Lincoln dealer to have the OCSM replaced. Dealers will be instructed to return any unsold inventory of OCSMs from the suspect population. Ford will further instruct dealers to notify customers who may have received an OCSM during vehicle service, where information is available, to return their vehicles for OCSM replacement.

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
Attachment



49 CFR PART 573 – DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT
12S31 – CERTAIN 2012 MODEL YEAR F-150 VEHICLES - OCCUPANT CLASSIFICATION
SYSTEM CALIBRATION

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 2012 model year F-150 vehicles built at Dearborn Truck Plant (DTP) from November 6, 2012 to November 15, 2012.

Service parts that were used as warranty replacements or sold between October 24, 2011 through December 31, 2011, for 2012 model year F-150 trucks are potentially affected.

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 passenger seats, which include the Occupant Classification System Module (OCSM), for the affected vehicles were assembled in Bridgewater Interiors' facility in the U.S.

The Bridgewater Interiors' contact person for this component is:

Melanie Melendez,
Plant Manager
Phone Number: (586) 753-3106

Bridgewater Interiors
4617 W Fort St
Detroit, MI 48209

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

Approximately 101 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

A limited number of 2012 F-150 vehicles may not have had their OCSM software properly updated prior to release from DTP.

Under certain, rare driving conditions, vehicles equipped with the incorrect software may temporarily experience an inaccurate occupant classification which may or may not result in an unexpected Passenger Airbag Disable Light function or belt minder system actuation.

Ford has not received any field reports for this issue.

573.6 (c) (6) – Chronology of Events

In November 2011, during testing on the squeak and rattle course at the Kansas City Assembly Plant (KCAP), drivers noted a beltmarker chime and seat belt light illumination while the driver was properly buckled and the passenger seat was empty, under certain aggressive accelerations, upon engine start-up. It was determined that the OCSM had a software level that did not meet design intent. During November 2011 the vehicles were reprogrammed at KCAP and DTP with the correct software level. Subsequent to the reprogramming effort, it was determined that a small number of vehicles at DTP had been programmed with a tool that contained the original, unintended, software level.

Ford Restraints Engineering conducted several vehicle evaluations and computer simulations to understand the potential impact of the unintended software. These vehicles comply with all FMVSS requirements; however, it was determined that, although unlikely, it is possible for vehicles equipped with the unintended software to experience an inaccurate occupant classification for a limited time, upon aggressive acceleration at engine start-up.

On April 23, 2012, Ford's Field Review Committee reviewed the concern and in an abundance of caution 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 or Lincoln dealer to have the OCSM replaced. Dealers will be instructed to return any unsold inventory of OCSMs from the suspect population. Ford will further instruct dealers to notify customers who may have received the OCSM during vehicle service, where information is available, to return their vehicles for OCSM replacement. There will be no charge to owners for this service.

Mailing of owner notification letters will occur May 21, 2012. Notification to dealers will occur on May 1, 2012.

In accordance with Part 573.13(d)(1), Ford is excluding reimbursement for costs incurred by owners for repair of this concern 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 12S31 to this action.

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