



**Steve M. Kenner, Global Director**  
Automotive Safety Office  
Sustainability, Environment & Safety Engineering

**Fairlane Plaza South, Suite 400**  
330 Town Center Drive  
Dearborn, MI 48126-2738

June 24, 2013

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. 13S07 – Certain 2013 model year Ford Explorer, Taurus, and Lincoln MKS vehicles – Child Safety Lock

Summary

- Ford Action – Ford is conducting a voluntary safety recall involving certain 2013 model year Ford Explorer, Taurus, and Lincoln MKS vehicles potentially built with an improperly formed child safety lock component.
- Number of Vehicles Involved – Approximately 12,569 vehicles in the United States and federalized territories are potentially affected.
- Effect on Vehicle Operation – Certain vehicles may have been built with child safety locks that have an improperly formed internal component. The improperly formed component can cause low retention torque for the child safety lock assembly. With sufficient door openings/closings, this condition may allow a child safety lock to change from an activated to deactivated position without input from the operator. If the rear door is unlocked, a deactivated child lock would not prevent the door from opening when the interior door handle is activated. In all cases the rear door latch requires two operations to unlock and unlatch the door when the rear door is locked.
- Service Procedure – Owners will be notified by mail and instructed to take their vehicle(s) to a Ford or Lincoln dealer to have the child safety locks tested and, if necessary, the rear door latch replaced.

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

Sincerely,

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Steven M. Kenner  
Attachment

49 CFR Part 573 – DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT  
13S07 – CERTAIN 2013 MODEL YEAR FORD EXPLORER, TAURUS, AND LINCOLN MKS  
VEHICLES - CHILD SAFETY LOCK

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 2013 model year Ford Explorer, Taurus, and Lincoln MKS vehicles built at the Chicago Assembly Plant (CAP) from November 29, 2012, through December 12, 2012.

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 dealer who can obtain specific information regarding the vehicles from the Ford On-line Automotive Service Information System (OASIS) database

The information for the supplier of the rear door latch assembly, that is the subject of this defect report, is provided below.

Rear Door Latch Assembly:

Supplier Name: Brose, NA  
Supplier Address: 3933 Automation Avenue, Auburn Hills, MI 48326  
Supplier Telephone Number: 248-339-4801  
Supplier Contact: Jim Barbaretta  
Country of origin for the component: Mexico

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

Approximately 12,569 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

The Tier III supplier of child safety lock actuation cams provided a shipment of components that contained some improperly formed parts due to tool wear. This tool wear, found in a blind area of the child safety lock cam injection-molding tool, intermittently resulted in the formation of excessive flash at the "toe" of the child safety lock spring leg. The excessive flash causes the leg to stick inward against the body of the part, substantially reducing the detent torque. A single cavity in the four cavity tool exhibited the intermittent forming condition. The other tool cavities were unaffected and the vast majority of parts produced in the affected cavity, during the suspect time frame, will not exhibit the low detent torque.

A child safety lock with low retention torque, after thousands of door openings/closings, could potentially become inactive without operator input. In an abundance of caution, Ford is taking this field service action.

In all cases the rear door latch requires two operations to unlock and unlatch the door when the rear door lock is in its locked position.

Ford is not aware of any accidents or injuries associated with this condition.

#### 573.6 (c) (6) – Chronology of Events

On December 6, 2012, during a routine dock audit, the Tier I latch supplier identified a latch with lower than expected child safety lock retention torque.

On December 7, 2012, Ford's Chicago Assembly Plant (CAP) was notified of the condition and a stop ship was issued. Yard audits were conducted on vehicles being held. In parallel, an investigation by the Tier I supplier identified out of specification child lock components provided by a Tier III supplier. All loose stock latches as well as in-process components were inspected for the out of specification condition identified in the dock audit.

On December 20, 2012, Ford's Critical Concern Review Group (CCRG) reviewed results of yard and loose stock campaigns, as well as preliminary bench and vehicle level evaluations. It was determined that further testing was required to understand the potential effects on vehicle operation in the field.

During January 2013 and February 2013 Ford evaluated campaigned parts and conducted additional component bench testing. Activation/deactivation torque data from campaigned parts was gathered and evaluated to understand the torque distribution across the suspect lot of parts, as well as the correlation between the measured torque and real world vehicle performance of the child safety locks. CAD modeling was utilized to evaluate the dynamic interactions of the door latch during normal door open/closing cycles for the different vehicle designs. Ford's CCRG reviewed the test and evaluation results and identified that vehicle design attribute differences may cause different effects to the child safety lock during normal usage. It was determined that further, vehicle-specific testing was necessary to understand these vehicle and door sealing system differences and their potential effects on the child safety lock function.

March 2013 through May 2013, accelerated full useful life vehicle level door closure testing was conducted on each vehicle line. Latch assemblies exhibiting the lowest retention torque identified during the campaign were installed in vehicles and testing included environmental factors such as dust, dirt, temperature and humidity cycling to model real world customer usage during the expected life of the vehicle.

On June 7, 2013, a Technical Review Group reviewed the platform specific vehicle test results and the projected retention torque values across the suspect population of latches. Vehicle level testing on the subject vehicles indicated that, over time, when a minimum of approximately 9,000 door open/close cycles accumulated, the child safety lock could change positions without operator input. The number of cycles required for this condition to occur represented approximately 13 months of door opening/closing.

On June 17, 2013, Ford's Field Review Committee approved a field service 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 child safety locks tested and, if necessary, the latch replaced. There will be no charge to owners for this service.

Mailing of owner notification letters will occur the week of August 5, 2013. Notification to dealers will occur on June 26, 2013.

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 13S07 to this action.

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