

RECEIVED

By Recall Management Division at 10:59 am, May 07, 2014

14V-239
(4 pages)



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

May 5, 2014

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) 2013-2014 Model Year Ford Escape Safety Recall #14S03

In accordance with the requirements of 49 CFR Part 573 Defect and Non-compliance Information Reports, please find the applicable information regarding Ford Motor Company's voluntary safety recall #14S03

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S. M. Kenner for".

Steven M. Kenner

Attachment

49 CFR PART 573 – DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT
2013-2014 MODEL YEAR FORD ESCAPE SAFETY RECALL #14S03
EXTERIOR DOOR HANDLE REINFORCEMENT MISALIGNMENT

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 2013-2014 model year Ford Escape vehicles built at Ford's Louisville Assembly Plant (LAP) from October 5, 2011, through April 10, 2014.

These vehicles were 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 original supplier of the outer door strap and bezel, and the supplier of the latch mini-module and handle reinforcement, which are the subject of this defect report, are provided below:

Exterior Handle Strap and Bezel

Huf North America
24860 Hathaway Drive
Farmington Hills, MI 48335
Ehab Kamal – Engineering Director
(248) 699-0783
Country of Origin: USA

Latch Mini-Module and Handle Reinforcement

Brose-Jefferson
25295 Guenther Drive
Warren, MI 48091
Ana Almeida
(248) 310-0499
Country of Origin: Assembled in the USA with global components

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

Approximately 581,986 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

In some of the affected vehicles, an assembly misalignment may exist between the exterior door handle and the door outer panel. A misalignment of the handle may cause internal interference and a binding condition, that may result in a door which is difficult to close or potentially opens while driving, increasing the risk of injury to an occupant.

No accidents or injuries have been reported to date as a result of the subject condition.

573.6 (c) (6) – Chronology of Events

April-June 2013: Ford identified 2013 model year Escape vehicles with reports of exterior handles stuck, doors which were difficult to close, or in a small number of reports, doors allegedly opening while driving. An engineering investigation into these reports was opened and field returned parts were requested for review and testing.

July-September 2013: Ford continued to monitor field data and to retrieve door handle assemblies. Engineering reviewed field returned parts and identified vehicle and environmental testing to help define the nature of the issues and field reports.

October-November 2013: Ford conducted laboratory testing to determine if water entry contributed to handle binding. No concerns were identified. Ford also conducted laboratory testing to determine if high temperatures were related to handle binding. Again, no concerns were identified. Data analysis showed a declining trend of reported door openings.

December 2013-January 2014: Engineering broadened their analysis to include all door latching related concerns and to determine if there were any trends related to vehicle age, mileage, or drive cycle. The engineering investigation team also agreed to begin contacting customers who had reported door openings while driving to better understand the condition.

February 2014: Ford attempted to contact and speak with customers that alleged that their vehicle door opened while driving to better understand their reports and concerns.

March 2014: Engineering completed its component level tolerance stack-up of the handle reinforcement locator and identified that a possible handle interference concern could occur if the handle reinforcement was improperly located in the door sheet metal during vehicle assembly.

April 2014: Engineering evaluated a number of vehicles and manually located handles improperly in the door sheet metal. These in-vehicle evaluations confirmed that binding of the exterior door handle could result. Testing also indicated that cold temperatures and high humidity could increase the likelihood of an improperly located outer door handle assembly to bind.

On April 28, 2014, Ford's Field Review Committee reviewed the concern 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 or Lincoln dealer. Dealers will inspect all four exterior door handles and reposition as necessary.

Mailing of owner notification letters will occur the week of May 26, 2014. Notification to dealers will occur on May 7, 2014.

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 14S03 to this action.

###