

Part 573 Safety Recall Report**15V-171****Manufacturer Name :** Ford Motor Company**Submission Date :** MAR 23,2015**NHTSA Recall No. :** 15V-171**Manufacturer Recall No. :** 15S11**Manufacturer Information :**

Manufacturer Name : Ford Motor Company

Address : 330 Town Center Drive

Suite 500 Dearborn MI 48126-2738

Company phone : 1-866-436-7332

Population :

Number of potentially involved : 194,484

Estimated percentage with defect : 0

Vehicle Information :

Vehicle : 2011-2013 Ford Explorer

Vehicle Type : LIGHT VEHICLES

Body Style : ALL

Power Train : NR

Descriptive Information : Additional production dates are affected:

6/1/2012 - 6/30/2012 and 10/1/2012 - 11/30/2012

Affected vehicles may be equipped with suspect interior door handles.

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.

Production Dates : FEB 01, 2011 - JAN 31, 2012

VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) Range

Begin : NR

End : NR

 Not sequential VINs**Description of Defect :**

Description of the Defect : The interior door handle return spring may become unseated, resulting in an interior handle that is floppy or does not return to the fully stowed position after actuation. While the door latch actuation and engagement during normal vehicle usage and operation is unaffected, this condition may allow a door to unlatch during a side impact crash.

Ford is not aware of any reports of accident or injury related to this condition.

Description of the Safety Risk : If the interior door handle return spring is unseated, the door may unlatch during a side impact crash, increasing the risk of injury.

Description of the Cause : Creep fatigue was identified as a factor that may lead to fracture of the return spring retaining wall in some of these vehicles. During certain production time periods the interior door handles experience an elevated number of reports associated with creep fatigue related fracture of the spring retaining wall. While the exact cause has not been identified, process variation during the manufacture and assembly of the interior door handle, is likely the cause.

Identification of Any Warning that can Occur : A loose or floppy interior door handle or a handle that does not return to the fully stowed position after actuation.

Supplier Identification :**Component Manufacturer**

Name : Key Plastics

Address : 21700 Haggerty Road #150N
Northville MICHIGAN 48167

Country : United States

Chronology :

August 2014 – As part of ongoing work related to Ford’s investigation into reports of loose or floppy interior door handles on Taurus vehicles (refer to Ford action 15S02, NHTSA # 15V040), it was identified that Explorer vehicles used the same interior door handle design and the same supplier. Additional data reviews were conducted on the Explorer vehicles to understand the field performance. An elevated number of reports were identified.

September 2014 – Analysis was conducted by the supplier to replicate the cracked spring wall condition that was observed in the field return parts. Analysis of the field return parts was also completed by Ford’s Central Labs.

The parts analyses, supplier testing, and field data were found to be inconclusive, and the engineering team was unable to provide a thorough assessment without additional testing.

September - December 2014 – The supplier and Ford conducted an extensive computer-aided engineering (CAE) analysis of an interior door handle without the return spring on all four vehicle doors in various front, side and rear impact crash modes. Based on the results of these CAE analyses, a series of physical crash tests were developed to further assess performance of these handles in certain side crash modes for both struck and non-struck sides of the vehicle. Component level testing was also conducted to assess the long-term effect that a suspect interior door handle might have on the ability of the door to latch during normal vehicle usage if the condition was not repaired. This testing did not identify any associated door latching concerns.

December 2014 - February 2015 – Physical crash testing of Explorer vehicles included three moving barrier side impact tests and two oblique side pole tests. A moving barrier side impact test was completed in late-February and identified a potential concern with the non-struck side door.

On March 16, 2015, Ford’s Field Review Committee reviewed the concern and approved a field action.

Description of Remedy :

Description of Remedy Program : Owners will be notified by mail and instructed to take their vehicle(s) to a Ford or Lincoln dealer to have all four interior door handles inspected and

either repaired or replaced. There will be no charge to owners for this service.

Ford's general reimbursement plan for the cost of remedies paid for by vehicle owners prior to notification of a safety recall was provided to the Agency on February 20, 2015.

The ending date for reimbursement eligibility for the cost of remedies paid for by vehicle owners per Ford's general reimbursement plan is May 27, 2015.

Ford will forward a copy of the notification letters to dealers to the Agency when available.

How Remedy Component Differs from Recalled Component : NR

Identify How/When Recall Condition was Corrected in Production : NR

Recall Schedule :

Description of Recall Schedule : Notification to dealers will occur on March 24, 2015. Mailing of owner notification letters will begin May 11, 2015, and is expected to be completed by May 15, 2015.

Planned Dealer Notification Date : MAR 24, 2015 - MAR 24, 2015

Planned Owner Notification Date : MAY 11, 2015 - MAY 15, 2015

* NR - Not Reported