

January 27, 2015

2010-2013 Ford Taurus and 2011-2013 Lincoln MKS – Interior Door Handle – 15S02

Provide the chronology of events leading up to the defect decision or test data for the noncompliance decision.

May 2014 – During normal reviews of field data, Ford observed an elevated number of reports pertaining to Taurus interior door handles. Detailed review found to them to principally relate to loose or “floppy” interior door handles, as well as interior door handles that did not return to the fully stowed position after actuation. Based on these analyses, this concern was brought to Ford’s Critical Concern Review Group (CCRG) for further review.

June 2014 – Ford’s Supplier Technical Assistance group conducted component manufacturing line walks, process walks and reviews of supplier data, including maintenance records to assist with understanding the concern. Discussions were also held to assess potential effect on vehicle operation.

July - August 2014 –Interior door handles were collected from the field, and analyzed by Ford and the handle supplier. This analysis involved handles that had a field performance concern (floppy, loose, etc.) as well as those that had no reported performance concerns, for comparative purposes. Additional data reviews were conducted to understand field performance, as well as identify other potential vehicle lines that use the same or similar interior door handles.

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 - November 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 – Crash testing of Taurus vehicles included a side moving barrier test and an oblique side pole test. The final test, the oblique pole, was completed in late December and identified a potential concern with the non-struck side door when the vehicle was in rebound.

On January 20, 2015, Ford’s Field Review Committee reviewed the concern and crash test result summary and approved a field action.