

# Part 573 Safety Recall Report

## 21V-746

**Manufacturer Name :** Ford Motor Company

**Submission Date :** DEC 21, 2021

**NHTSA Recall No. :** 21V-746

**Manufacturer Recall No. :** 21S43



### 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 :** 150,723

**Estimated percentage with defect :** 1 %

### Vehicle Information :

Vehicle 1 : 2011-2013 Ford Explorer

Vehicle Type : LIGHT VEHICLES

Body Style :

Power Train : NR

Descriptive Information : Affected vehicles may have been serviced with a rear knuckle containing a toe link cross-axis ball joint attachment manufactured by ZF Friedrichshafen AG.

2011-2013 model year vehicles with build dates through September 3, 2012, that are registered, have ever been registered, or were sold in Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin and the District of Columbia are affected. Ford is conducting research to obtain the latest vehicle registrations, which may cause the volumes to change slightly after this defect notice is submitted. An update will be provided to the Agency after the latest registrations are obtained.

Original submission:

2011 = 39,747

2012 = 41,572

2013 = 44,714

December 21, 2021 Update:

2011 = 49,541

2012 = 48,464

2013 = 52,718

Vehicles that have not yet been remedied under the existing campaigns 19S17 and 16S18 will remain active in those campaigns until parts are available to launch 21S43.

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 : MAY 17, 2010 - SEP 03, 2012

VIN Range 1 : Begin :

NR

End : NR

Not sequential

**Description of Defect :**

Description of the Defect : Vehicles included in this action were originally built with a bushing design for the rear suspension toe link attachment. Upon subsequent service or repair of the rear suspension, a cross-axis ball joint (CABJ) replacement may have been utilized for the rear suspension toe link attachment. On vehicles sold or operated primarily in traditional corrosion states, a rear suspension CABJ can seize, resulting in a fracture of the outboard section of the rear suspension toe link.

FMVSS 1 : NR

FMVSS 2 : NR

Description of the Safety Risk : A fracture of a rear toe link significantly diminishes steering control, increasing the risk of a crash.

Description of the Cause : The outboard section of the rear suspension toe link was originally attached by a rubber bushing; however, some of the affected vehicles that have had one (or both) rear wheel knuckle(s) replaced, may now contain a replacement cross-axis ball joint (CABJ). Field data indicates that this CABJ may be susceptible to seizing in certain high corrosion areas when exposed to road salt over several years. A seized CABJ can increase bending stresses in the outboard section of the toe link causing a fracture.

Identification of Any Warning that can Occur : None

**Involved Components :**

Component Name 1 : Left Rear Knuckle

Component Description : Rear Suspension Knuckle Assembly

Component Part Number : DB5Z-5B759-B Left Rear Knuckle

Component Name 2 : Right Rear Knuckle

Component Description : Rear Suspension Knuckle Assembly

Component Part Number : DB5Z-5B758-B

**Supplier Identification :****Component Manufacturer**

Name : Alludyne

Address : 300 Galleria Officentre  
Suite 501 Southfield Michigan 48034  
Country : United States

## **Chronology :**

On July 8, 2021, Ford approved a field action 21S32 (21V537) for 2013-2017 MY Explorers in the United States equipped with ZF CABJ based on 48 reports of toe link fracture. All reports involve vehicles operated primarily in corrosion states that use significant amounts of road salt in winter months.

Explorer vehicles were designed and built with two different types of rear toe link attachment. To date, all incidents relating to this subject are on the CABJ design manufactured by ZF Friedrichshafen AG that was installed in vehicles produced from September 4, 2012 - September 2017. No reports have been received on Explorer vehicles built prior to September 4, 2012. Those vehicles utilize a rubber bushing design.

Since July 2021, Ford continued to investigate the potential risk to vehicles that were repaired with service parts containing the ZF CABJ. Ford has identified approx. 2800 vehicles built prior to September 4, 2012, that had ZF CABJ installed as part of service conducted by a Ford dealer.

Ford and NHTSA met to discuss the status of Ford's analysis and conclusions.

On September 15, 2021, Ford's Field Review Committee reviewed the concern and approved a field action.

Ford is not aware of any accidents or injuries pertaining to this subject on these vehicles.

Ford is providing a customer satisfaction program for vehicles not sold or registered in corrosion states.

December 21, 2021: Ford revised the number of vehicles potentially affected according to the latest registration information. Launch timing is revised to January 2022.

## Description of Remedy :

Description of Remedy Program : Owners will be notified by mail and instructed to take their vehicle to a Ford or Lincoln dealer for inspection for the presence of a CABJ. If a CABJ of any design is observed, the dealer will conduct a torque inspection of the CABJ, and replacement of the CABJ/knuckle/toe link as necessary. There will be no charge for this service.

Ford provided the general reimbursement plan for the cost of remedies paid for by vehicle owners prior to notification of a safety recall in May 2021. The ending date for reimbursement eligibility is estimated to be June 30, 2022, Ford will provide more accurate dates when the final owner letter is published.

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

How Remedy Component Differs from Recalled Component : The new CABJ is provided by a different supplier and has a longer life expectancy. The new toe links are stronger and resistant to a seized CABJ.

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

## Recall Schedule :

Description of Recall Schedule : Notification to dealers is expected to occur on September 23, 2021. Mailing of owner notification letters is expected to begin November 1, 2021 and is expected to be completed by November 5, 2021 advising owners that parts are expected to be available during the 4th Quarter of 2021. Mailing of owner notification letters instructing customers to take their vehicle to a Ford dealer will be mailed in the 4th Quarter 2021.

December 21, 2021 Update: Mailing of owner notification letters instructing customers to take their vehicle to a Ford dealer will be mailed in January 2022.

Planned Dealer Notification Date : SEP 24, 2021 - SEP 24, 2021

Planned Owner Notification Date : NOV 01, 2021 - NOV 05, 2021

\* NR - Not Reported