

Date of Submission: 1/19/2024

FSA #24S02 – Certain 2011 - 2019 model year Ford Explorer vehicles – A-Pillar Exterior Trim Detachment

Chronology

In **2018**, Ford's CCRG (Critical Concern Review Group) received an informal inquiry from NHTSA (National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration) related to exterior A-pillar trim parts detachments on 2012-2014MY Explorer vehicles. The vehicle utilizes a plastic bracket bolted to the vehicle structure and the exterior A-pillar trim is attached to the bracket utilizing (7) plastic clips. If all the clip attachments are not properly engaged, the parts can loosen and potentially detach from the plastic bracket. (25) VOQ's (Vehicle Online Questionnaire) were identified as potentially related to loose, missing or detached trim. Ford provided an exemplar part to NHTSA for review. Ford determined that this concern was not an unreasonable risk to safety due to the low mass/geometry of the part with NHTSA alignment.

On **April 20, 2021**, CCRG re-opened this concern based upon (8) new VOQ's identified in the 2021CY during an unrelated search. CCRG conducted a historical review of all VOQ's (158 complaints) related to this condition. Ford's CCRG closed this issue on **July 13, 2021**, based upon low mass/sharpness of part, overt visible and audible warning of the concern to the customer, and a decreasing trend in warranty and VOQ rates.

On **February 15, 2023**, NHTSA opened a Preliminary Investigation (PE23-001) to investigate this concern. Ford opened an investigation in CCRG to manage the Preliminary Investigation response to NHTSA and prepared responses and documents for NHTSA's questions.

On **April 17, 2023**, Ford provided a response to PE23-001.

In **August 2023**, Ford received an inquiry from Transport Canada including reports associated with the same concern.

September 2023 – October 2023

Ford and NHTSA had on-going discussions regarding the concern and the potential causes of the concern. NHTSA indicated that it is NHTSA's position that the potential occurrence of the trim part detaching while driving is a safety hazard to other vehicles.

November 2023 – January 2024

In reviewing NHTSA's position, Transport Canada's inquiry, and the updated field data associated with Ford's response, CCRG and engineering team reassessed their previous recommendations. Based upon the new assessment, a proactive action to inspect and replace exterior A-pillar trim parts as required on the suspect population of Explorer vehicles was recommended. Based upon the warranty data, the entire 2011 – 2019MY vehicle population was determined to be susceptible to detachment and was included in the recommendation.

As of **January 12, 2024**, Ford is aware of 568 VOQ's and 14,337 warranty reports alleging missing or detached exterior A-pillar trim parts.

On **January 12, 2024**, Ford's Field Review Committee reviewed the concern and approved a field action.

Ford is not aware of any reports of accidents or injuries related to this condition.