



U.S. Department
of Transportation

National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

Part 573 Safety Recall Report

25V687

Manufacturer Name: Ford Motor Company

Submission Date: Dec 18, 2025

NHTSA Recall No.: 25V687

Manufacturer Recall No.: 25SA3

Manufacturer Information

Population

Manufacturer Name: Ford Motor Company

Address: 20000 Rotunda Drive
Mezzanine
Dearborn MI, 48124

Total number of potentially involved: 1,412

Estimated percentage with defect: 1%

Vehicle Information

Vehicle 1: 2024-2026 LINCOLN AVIATOR

Product Category: Light Vehicles

Product Type: Multipurpose Passenger Vehicle

Fuel / Propulsion:

Production Dates: Feb 17, 2024 - Oct 21, 2025

Number of potentially involved: 175

Descriptive Information:

Affected vehicles may have trailer tow hitch assembly bolts that are not properly secured. Ford's team reviewed plant records to determine the population of affected vehicles, as assembly plant processes are capable of tracing bolt torque data to individual vehicles.

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.

175 Aviator vehicles are affected.

Vehicle 2: 2024-2026 FORD EXPLORER

Product Category: Light Vehicles

Product Type: Multipurpose Passenger Vehicle

Fuel / Propulsion:

Production Dates: Jan 17, 2024 - Oct 24, 2025

Number of potentially involved: 1,237

Descriptive Information:

Part 573 Safety Recall Report

25V687

Affected vehicles may have trailer tow hitch assembly bolts that are not properly secured. Ford's team reviewed plant records to determine the population of affected vehicles, as assembly plant processes are capable of tracing bolt torque data to individual vehicles.

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.

1237 Explorer vehicles are affected.

Defect / Noncompliance Description

Description of the defect or noncompliance:

Bolts used to attach the vehicle trailer tow hitch may have below specification torque.

FMVSS1:

FMVSS2:

Description of the safety risk, including crash, fire, death, injury:

The condition may affect the vehicle handling characteristics while towing a trailer. Additionally, trailer hitch assembly bolts with below-specification torque could lead to loss of attachment of the trailer hitch while towing a trailer. These conditions increase the risk of a crash.

Description of the cause:

On certain vehicles the manufacturing line operator may not have fully completed the bolt secure process.

Identification of any warning that can occur:

Trailer hitch assembly bolts with below-specification torque may result in a rattle noise from the rear of the vehicle.

Component Manufacturer

Tier of Supplier:

Supplier Type:

Name: Ford Motor Company

Address: 1 American Road
Dearborn MI, 48126

Country: United States

Part 573 Safety Recall Report

25V687

Involved Components

Component Name 1:**Component Description:****Component Part Number:**

Chronology

On August 7, 2025, Ford's Chicago Assembly Plant (CAP) team members identified two warranty claims of 2025 model year Explorer vehicles with some of the bolts used to secure the trailer hitch assembly found loose. On August 12, 2025, this issue was brought to Ford's Critical Concern Review Group for review.

August – September 2025

Upon review of plant error proofing data, the investigation team determined that both vehicles had been released from a chassis assembly station with faults indicating the primary assembly tool did not complete one or more of the bolt secures. The investigation team's review of in-plant repair data determined that plant team members incorrectly indicated repairs for this condition were complete on the two vehicles.

The CCRG's investigation identified one similar occurrence of this condition on a 2025 Explorer produced in October 2024. Plant error proofing and repair data showed similar characteristics as the two initially identified warranty claims.

Ford's Vehicle Crash Safety team conducted analytical assessments for the trailer tow bolt attachment conditions observed in the warranty claims. From these assessments, they concluded that the conditions would meet the Ford Safety Design Guideline (SDG) for rear offset impact and comply with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 301 Fuel System Integrity Rear Offset impact, and Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 305 High Voltage System Integrity Rear Offset Impact for the different variants of Explorer and Aviator vehicles.

Ford's Body Structures Engineering team assessed the issue and determined trailer hitch bolts with below specification torque may allow the bolted joint to slip. This slippage could lead to increased loading in the attaching structure, which may result in a reduction of structural integrity over time and could lead to loss of attachment of the trailer hitch while towing a trailer.

To determine the recall population, the investigation team reviewed additional plant error proofing and repair data to identify vehicles with similar characteristics as the three warranty vehicles.

On October 3, 2025, Ford's Field Review Committee reviewed the concern and approved a field action.

Subsequent to this approval, on November 21, 2025, CAP team members identified a new warranty claim for a vehicle with loose right side trailer tow bolts. Upon further investigation, this unit was found to have been repaired by one of the plant team member that had incorrectly indicated repairs were completed for the loose bolt condition on previous vehicles. This vehicle associated with the newest claim was repaired at the plant after implementation of process improvement associated with the field action. The investigation team reviewed repair data of vehicles repaired by this team member and identified a population of additional suspect vehicles.

On December 11, 2025, Ford's Field Review Committee approved an amended field action adding these vehicles to the 25SA3 population.

Part 573 Safety Recall Report**25V687**

Ford is aware of four potentially related warranty (GSAR/AWS) reports. The first of these reports was received by Ford on November 27, 2025. Ford is not aware of any reports of accident or injury related to this condition.

Related NHTSA Recall Number:

Description of Remedy

Remedy Type: Inspect, Repair, Replace

Consumer Advisories: Do Not Drive Park Outside

Description of remedy program:

Owners will be notified by mail and instructed to take their vehicle to a Ford or Lincoln dealer to have the trailer tow hitch bolts inspected and secured or replaced as required. There will be no charge for this service.

How remedy component differs from recalled component:

The trailer tow hitch bolts will be properly torqued to specification.

Identify how/when recall condition was corrected in production:

Not required per 49 Part 573.

Reimbursement Plan

Manufacturer used general reimbursement plan on file.

Recall Schedule

Description of recall schedule:

Notification to dealers is expected to occur on 10/15/2025. Interim owner notification letters are not required as parts are available. Mailing of remedy owner notification letters is expected to begin 10/27/2025 and is expected to be completed by 10/27/2025. The date VINs are planned to be searchable is 10/15/2025.

Planned Dealer Notification Date: Oct 15, 2025 - Oct 15, 2025 No Dealers

Planned Interim Owner Notification Date: No Owners

Planned Remedy Owner Notification Date: Oct 27, 2025 - Oct 27, 2025 Phased Recall

Part 573 Safety Recall Report

25V687

Date when VIN will be searchable: Oct 15, 2025