



U.S. Department
of Transportation

National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

Part 573 Safety Recall Report

26V101

Manufacturer Name: Ford Motor Company

Submission Date: Feb 20, 2026

NHTSA Recall No.: 26V101

Manufacturer Recall No.: 26S08

Manufacturer Information

Population

Manufacturer Name: Ford Motor Company

Address: 20000 Rotunda Drive
Mezzanine
Dearborn MI, 48124

Total number of potentially involved: 412,774

Estimated percentage with defect: 1%

Vehicle Information

Vehicle 1: 2017-2019 FORD EXPLORER

Product Category: Light Vehicles

Product Type: Multipurpose Passenger Vehicle

Fuel / Propulsion:

Production Dates: May 16, 2017 - Mar 03, 2019

Number of potentially involved: 412,774

Descriptive Information:

Affected vehicles are equipped with cross-axis ball joint (CABJ) parts manufactured by SAF and rear suspension toe links that may fracture under certain loading conditions. This combination of CABJ and toe link was first used in production on May 16, 2017, and taken out of production on March 3, 2019.

412,774 Explorer vehicles are affected

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.

Defect / Noncompliance Description

Description of the defect or noncompliance:

Affected vehicles have rear suspension toe links that may fracture.

FMVSS1:

FMVSS2:

Part 573 Safety Recall Report

26V101

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

Fracture of a rear toe link diminishes steering control, increasing the risk of a crash.

Description of the cause:

The root cause has not been fully determined to date. Some reports indicate vehicles experienced a seized CABJ. A seized CABJ will result in a bending moment on the toe link potentially resulting in fracture.

Identification of any warning that can occur:

The driver may notice a clunk noise, unusual handling, and/or a misaligned rear wheel.

Component Manufacturer

Tier of Supplier:

Supplier Type: OEM

Name: Ford Motor Company

Address: 20000 Rotunda Dr
Dearborn MI, 48124

Country: United States

Involved Components

Component Name 1: : Link Rear Suspension Component

Component Description: Toe Link for Explorer 3.5L FWD, 2.0L FWD, 2.3L FWD

Component Part Number: DB53-5A972-D*

Component Name 2: Link Rear Suspension Component

Component Description: Toe Link for Explorer 3.5L AWD, 3.7L AWD/FWD

Component Part Number: DB53-5A972-C*

Chronology

On July 8, 2021, Ford's Field Review Committee (FRC) approved safety Field Service Action (FSA) 21V537/21S32 for certain 2013 – 2017 model year Explorer vehicles to address the potential for rear toe link fracture resulting from a seized rear suspension cross axis ball joint (CABJ). Analysis of returned parts from these vehicles showed evidence of corrosion in seized ball joints and all occurrences at the time of FSA approval involved vehicles operated in U.S. corrosion states or provinces of Canada known to use road salt.

Part 573 Safety Recall Report

26V101

Vehicles included in the 21S32 population were equipped with an earlier design of CABJ determined to be susceptible to corrosion resulting from a sealing failure. Vehicles produced after the 21S32 population were equipped with a new design CABJ manufactured by SAF with an improved sealing system more robust to corrosion. A part harvest program in 2021 identified no instances of corroded SAF CABJ parts.

On January 13, 2026, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) contacted Ford regarding five Vehicle Owner Questionnaires (VOQs) they received describing a loss of directional control while driving resulting from a failed rear toe link on 2018 model year Explorer vehicles. These 2018 Explorers were equipped with SAF CABJs and were therefore not included in the 21S32 population. On January 20, 2026, Ford's Critical Concern Review Group (CCRG) opened an investigation into this concern.

The CCRG's investigation identified 26 reports received by Ford of rear toe link fracture globally on vehicles produced after the 21S32 population. Ford's investigation has not fully established root cause of these fractures to date, though a subset of reports indicate symptoms indicative of a seized CABJ.

On February 13, 2026, Ford's Field Review Committee reviewed the concern and approved a field action.

Ford is aware of two accidents globally potentially related to this issue involving vehicles hitting road guardrails/barriers following toe link fracture. Ford is not aware of any injuries potentially related to this issue.

Related NHTSA Recall Number: 21V537

Description of Remedy

Remedy Type: 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 toe links replaced with toe links of a revised design. There will be no charge for this service.

How remedy component differs from recalled component:

The remedy component toe links are stronger and more resistant to a seized CABJ than the recalled component toe links (DB53-5A972-C*, DB53-5A972-D*).

Identify how/when recall condition was corrected in production:

Not required per 49 Part 573.

Reimbursement Plan

Manufacturer used general reimbursement plan on file.

Part 573 Safety Recall Report

26V101

Recall Schedule

Description of recall schedule:

Notification to dealers is expected to occur on February 25, 2026. Mailing of owner notification letters is expected to begin March 9, 2026, and is expected to be completed by March 13, 2026.

Planned Dealer Notification Date: Feb 25, 2026 - Feb 25, 2026 No Dealers

Planned Interim Owner Notification Date: No Owners

Planned Remedy Owner Notification Date: Mar 09, 2026 - Mar 13, 2026 Phased Recall

Date when VIN will be searchable: Feb 25, 2026