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 Ford Customer Service Division

Ford Motor Company  
 P. O. Box 1904  
 Dearborn, Michigan 48121

November 4, 2022

**TO:** All U.S. Ford and Lincoln Dealers

**SUBJECT:** **Regional Program 21R01**  
 Certain 2011-2017 Model Year Explorer Vehicles  
 Rear Toe Link Replacement

**REF:** **Safety Recall 21S32**  
 Dated February 18, 2022

**REF:** **Customer Satisfaction Program 22N01**  
 Dated February 18, 2022

**PROGRAM TERMS**

There are no mileage or time limits for this program.

Customers that complete the 21R01 repair prior to July 31, 2023 will be eligible for a one-time replacement of the wheel knuckles (if needed). The eligibility for the one-time replacement of the wheel knuckles (if needed) is for six (6) months from the Repair Order date of 21R01. Please refer to Customer Satisfaction Program 22N01 for details.

**Note:** It will take 3-4 business days after 21R01 claim submission for 22N01 to show as an active program in OASIS.

**AFFECTED VEHICLES**

Vehicle	Model Year	Assembly Plant	Build Dates
Explorer	2011-2017	Chicago	February 11, 2011 through September 30, 2017

Affected vehicles are identified in OASIS and FSA VIN Lists.

Vehicles originally sold in, or currently registered in the high corrosion states listed below are covered under program 21S32. Vehicles currently located in the high corrosion states listed below, while not originally sold in or currently registered in a high corrosion state, are covered under this program.

In the United States				
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	District of Columbia		

**REASON FOR THIS REGIONAL PROGRAM**

Under Safety Recall 21S32, some of the affected vehicles exposed to a highly corrosive environment where road salt is used extensively during winter months (see list above), have experienced a seized toe link ball joint resulting in a fracture of the outboard section of the rear suspension toe link. A seized toe link ball joint can increase bending stresses in the toe link outboard of the turnbuckle. Rear

toe link fracture while driving could result in unusual vehicle handling characteristics, or difficulty controlling the vehicle and may increase the risk of a crash.

For 21R01, owners will be instructed to request a repair under this regional program if their vehicle is located in a high corrosion area (listed above), if the owner intends to operate their vehicle in a high corrosion area, or if they have concerns relating to their rear toe links.

**NOTE: Vehicles identified as originally sold, or currently registered in high corrosion areas are included in Safety Recall 21S32 and can be identified in OASIS.**

### **SERVICE ACTION**

If the vehicle owner presents their vehicle for repair under this program, dealers are to replace both rear suspension toe links, check alignment, and adjust rear toe. This service must be performed on all affected vehicles at no charge to the vehicle owner.

### **OWNER NOTIFICATION MAILING SCHEDULE**

Owner letters are expected to be mailed the week of November 28, 2022. Dealers should repair any affected vehicles that arrive at their dealerships, whether or not the customer has received a letter.

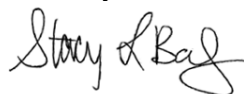
### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment I: Administrative Information  
Attachment II: Labor Allowances and Parts Ordering Information  
Attachment III: Technical Information  
Attachment IV: Use of Aftermarket Ball Joints/Bushings  
Owner Notification Letters

### **QUESTIONS & ASSISTANCE**

For questions and assistance, contact the Special Service Support Center (SSSC) via the SSSC Web Contact Site. The SSSC Web Contact Site can be accessed through the Professional Technician System (PTS) website using the SSSC link listed at the bottom of the OASIS VIN report screen or listed under the SSSC tab.

Sincerely,



Stacy L. Balzer

**Regional Program 21R01**  
Certain 2011-2017 Model Year Explorer Vehicles  
Rear Toe Link Replacement

**OASIS ACTIVATION**

OASIS will be activated on November 4, 2022.

**FSA VIN LISTS ACTIVATION**

FSA VIN Lists will not be activated for this service action.

**SOLD VEHICLES**

- Ford has not issued instructions to stop selling/delivering or driving used vehicles under this regional program.
- If a customer's vehicle exhibits fractured rear toe links or if owners are concerned about the toe links in their vehicles, they may request repairs under this regional program.
- Owners can continue to safely drive their vehicles.

**STOCK VEHICLES**

Use OASIS to identify any affected vehicles in your used vehicle inventory.

**TITLE BRANDED / SALVAGED VEHICLES**

Affected title branded and salvaged vehicles are eligible for this program.

**OWNER REFUNDS**

- **This regional program must still be performed, even if the owner has paid for a previous repair. Claiming a refund will not close the program on the vehicle.**
- Ford Motor Company is offering a refund for owner-paid repairs covered by this program if the repair was performed before the date of the Owner Notification Letter. This refund offer expires March 31, 2023.
- Owners are directed to seek reimbursement through authorized dealers or, at their option, directly through Ford Motor Company at P.O. Box 6251, Dearborn, MI 48121-6251.
- Dealers are also pre-approved to refund owner-paid emergency repairs that were performed away from an authorized servicing dealer after the end date specified in the reimbursement plan. Non-covered repairs, or those judged by Ford to be excessive, will not be reimbursed.
- Refunds will only be provided for the cost associated with rear suspension toe link replacement due to fracture.

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**RENTAL VEHICLES**

Rental vehicles are not approved for this program.

**ADDITIONAL REPAIR (LABOR TIME AND/OR PARTS)**

Additional repairs identified as necessary to complete the FSA should be managed as follows:

- For related damage and access time requirements, refer to the Warranty and Policy Manual / Section 6 – Ford & Lincoln Program Policies / General Information & Special Circumstances for FSA's / Related Damage.
- For vehicles within new vehicle bumper-to-bumper warranty coverage, no SSSC approval is required, although related damage must be on a separate repair line with the "Related Damage" radio button checked.
  - Ford vehicles – 3 years or 36,000 miles
- For vehicles outside new vehicle bumper-to-bumper warranty coverage, submit an Approval Request to the SSSC Web Contact Site prior to completing the repair.

**CLAIMS PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION**

- **Claim Entry:** Enter claims using Dealer Management System (DMS) or One Warranty Solution (OWS) online.
  - When entering claims, select claim type 31: Field Service Action. The FSA number 21R01 is the sub code.
  - For additional claims preparation and submission information, refer to the Recall and Customer Satisfaction Program (CSP) Repairs in the OWS User Guide.
- **Related Damage/Additional labor and/or parts:** Must be claimed as Related Damage on a separate repair line from the FSA with same claim type and sub code as described in Claim Entry above.

**IMPORTANT:** Click the Related Damage Indicator radio button.
- **Refunds:** Submit refunds on a separate repair line.
  - Program Code: 21R01                      - Misc. Expense: ADMIN
  - Misc. Expense: REFUND                      - Misc. Expense: 0.2 Hrs.
  - Multiple refunds should be submitted on one repair line and the invoice details for each repair should be detailed in the comments section of the claim.

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**LABOR ALLOWANCES**

Description	Labor Operation	Labor Time
Replace both rear suspension toe links	21R01B	0.4 Hours
Check alignment and, if necessary, adjust rear toe	21R01C	0.6 Hours

**PARTS REQUIREMENTS / ORDERING INFORMATION**

Part Number	Description	Engine	AWD/ FWD	Claim Quantity	Order Quantity
DB5Z-5A972-T	Rear Toe Link Kit – See affected Engine and AWD/FWD detail	3.5L TiVCT	AWD	1	1
		3.5L GTDI			
		3.7L DOHC			
		3.7L DOHC	FWD		
DB5Z-5A972-U	Rear Toe Link Kit – See affected Engine and AWD/FWD detail	2.3L GTDI	AWD	1	1
		2.3L GTDI	FWD		
		2.0L GTDI			
		3.5L TiVCT			

Order your parts through normal order processing channels. To guarantee the shortest delivery time, an emergency order for parts must be placed.

**DEALER PRICE**

For latest prices, refer to DOES II.

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**PARTS RETENTION, RETURN, & SCRAPPING**

Follow the provisions of the Warranty and Policy Manual, Section 1 - WARRANTY PARTS RETENTION AND RETURN POLICIES. If a replaced part receives a scrap disposition, the part must be scrapped in accordance with all applicable local, state and federal environmental protection and hazardous material regulations. Federal law prohibits selling motor vehicle parts or components that are under safety, compliance, or emissions recall.

**EXCESS STOCK RETURN**

Excess stock returned for credit must have been purchased from Ford Customer Service Division in accordance with Policy Procedure Bulletin 4000.

**REPLACED FSA PARTS INSPECTION AND SIGN OFF**

Effective March 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 all parts replaced as part of an FSA repair with a repair order open date of March 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 or later must be inspected and signed off on the repair order by a member of your dealers fixed operations management team or an employee the task has been delegated to. If the task is to be delegated to a non-management employee, the employee needs to be someone other than the technician who completed the repair and needs to understand the importance of completing this task consistently and accurately.

- All parts replaced as part of an FSA repair should be returned to the parts department following the Warranty Parts Retention and Return Policies.
- Inspect the replaced parts to verify the FSA repair was completed.
- If the FSA repair is found to be complete, the designated employee signs the repair order line or parts return stamp area (electronic or hand signed) for the FSA repair indicating the parts were inspected and validated to have been replaced.
- After the parts have been inspected, they should be handled based on the guidance in the parts status report in the Online Warranty System (Hold, Return, CORE, Scrap, etc.).
- This process is subject to review during warranty audits for FSA repairs with a repair order open date of March 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 or later. Any eligible FSA claims requiring parts replacement, found not to have been inspected and signed off during a warranty audit will be subject to chargeback and consideration for enrollment into the Dealer Incomplete Recall Repair Process.

**Note:** Other approvals (electronic or handwritten) for add-on repair lines, dealer owned vehicle repairs, and repeat repairs do not qualify as FSA parts inspection approvals. The post repair FSA parts inspection process (electronic or handwritten) is independent from other warranty approval requirements. The approval by the designated employee implies that the FSA parts were found to be replaced and must be able to be clearly identified on the Repair Order. If multiple FSA's require approval on a single Repair Order, each applicable occurrence will require individual post repair approval by the designated employee.

## CERTAIN 2013-2017 MODEL YEAR EXPLORER VEHICLES — REAR SUSPENSION TOE LINK REPLACEMENT

### SERVICE PROCEDURE

**⚠ WARNING:** Suspension fasteners are critical parts that affect performance of vital components and systems. Tighten fasteners as specified. Measure the distance from the center of the wheel hub to the lip of the fender with the vehicle in a level, static ground position (ride height) before disassembly. When securing the *new* toe link, it must be secured at the previously measured ride height.

**⚠ WARNING:** Tighten the suspension bushing fasteners with the suspension supported at ride height or with the weight of the vehicle resting on the wheels and tires, otherwise toe link and bushing damage may occur.

**NOTE:** This recall is to be performed on both the right rear and the left rear suspension.

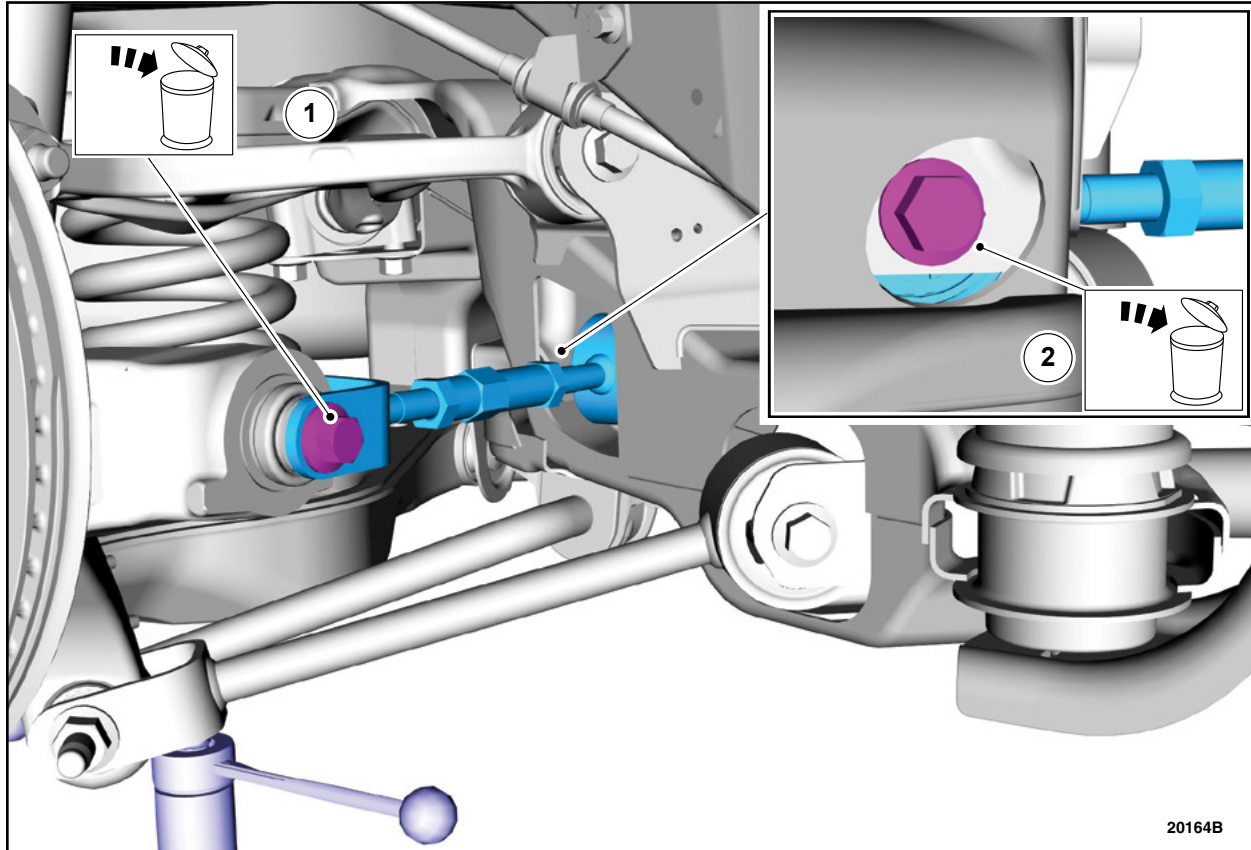
**NOTE:** It is recommended to perform this entire procedure on an alignment rack.

1. Position the vehicle on an alignment rack. Please follow the WSM procedures in Section 100-02.
2. Raise the rear of the vehicle by lifting the lower coil spring leaf.
3. Remove both rear tires. Please follow the WSM procedures in Section 204-04A.



4. Remove and discard both rear toe links. See Figure 1.

1. Remove and discard the toe link-to-wheel knuckle bolts and nuts.
2. Remove and discard the toe link-to-subframe bolt and remove the toe links.



**FIGURE 1**

**NOTE:** Do not torque the fasteners at this time.

5. Install the *new* toe links by reversing the removal procedure. See Figure 1.

- Only hand tighten the inboard fastener and snug the outboard retainer at this time.

6. Install both rear tires. Please follow the WSM procedures in Section 204-04A.

7. Lower the vehicle onto the alignment rack with the rear adjustment rack slip plates loose.

8. Tighten the inboard rear toe link bolts on both sides.

- Torque: 111 lb.ft (150 Nm)

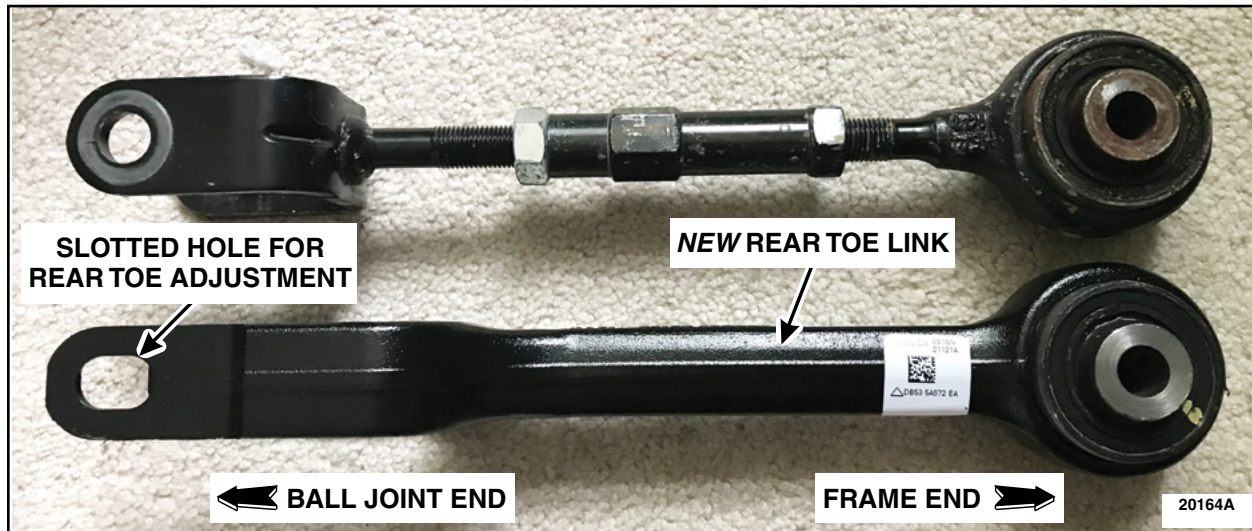




9. Set the tire pressure and perform an alignment and tighten the outboard bolt and nut on both sides.  
This completes the recall.

- Torque: 111 lb.ft (150 Nm)

**NOTE:** the ball joint side of the *new* toe link has a slot that is used for the alignment process.  
See Figure 2.



**FIGURE 2**

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Federal law prohibits selling motor vehicle parts or components that are under safety, compliance, or emissions recall. Unless a part is requested to be returned to Ford, all parts replaced under this FSA must be scrapped in accordance with all applicable local, state and federal environmental protection and hazardous material regulations. Refer to the Parts Retention, Return, & Scrapping section of the FSA dealer bulletin for further information.



**Regional Program 21R01**  
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Rear Toe Link Replacement

**Recommended Repair:**

If 2011-2019 Ford Explorers or PIU vehicles require service of the rear wheel knuckle and/or rear wheel knuckle bushings, the recommended repair is to replace the affected rear wheel knuckle (5B758/9) as an assembly only. Refer to WSM, Section 204-02, and the Ford Service Parts Catalog as needed.

**Issue:**

Ford has received reports of toe link failures on customer vehicles after the installation of non-OEM cross-axial ball joints (aka bushings) in the rear wheel knuckle. Installation of aftermarket bushings rather than replacement of the rear wheel knuckle assembly is not recommended, as this may limit the movement of the joint and cause stress on the toe link. In the reports that Ford received, the toe links failed shortly after installation of an aftermarket bushing installed by the dealership.

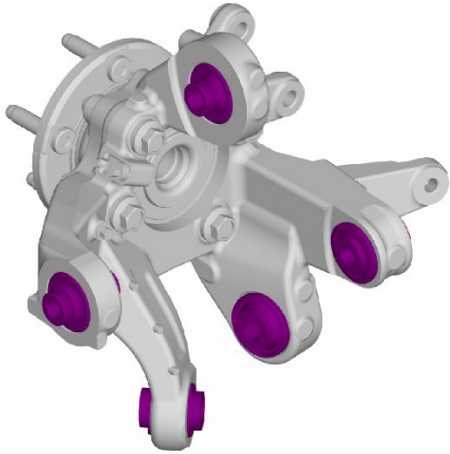
Dealerships may have serviced rear wheel knuckles, including use of aftermarket bushings, as part of preventive maintenance. These inspections and maintenance services sometimes took place as a separate customer paid repair when the vehicle was being serviced for the following FSAs: 19S17, 17G01, 16S18. Because these repairs would occur as a customer paid repair directly to the dealership and not submitted to Ford for reimbursement, Ford does not have a record of how many of these repairs may have occurred.

**Dealership Actions:**

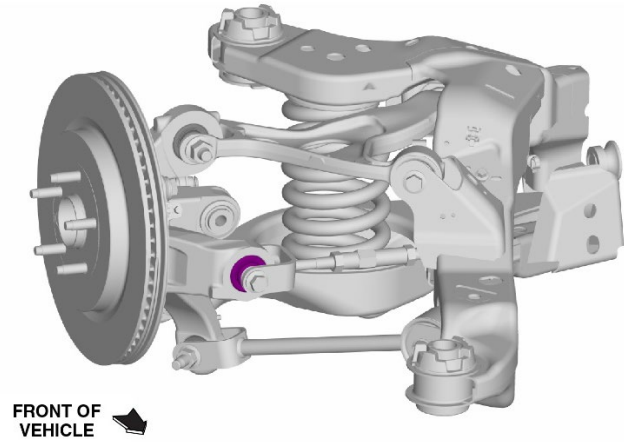
If your dealership performed repairs on the rear suspension of 2011-2019 Ford Explorers or PIU vehicles and installed aftermarket bushing(s) in the rear wheel knuckle instead of replacing the complete rear wheel knuckle assembly (at any time), you should identify all of the vehicles repaired with the aftermarket bushing(s), contact the customer, and replace the rear wheel knuckle as an assembly. Failure to do this may result in a toe link fracture. A fractured rear toe link will cause a sudden change in vehicle handling and increase the risk of a crash.

**Regional Program 21R01**  
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**KNUCKLE BALL JOINT/BUSHING LOCATIONS**



**RIGHT REAR TOW LINK BALL JOINT**





Ford Motor Company  
Ford Customer Service Division  
P. O. Box 1904  
Dearborn, Michigan 48121

November 2022

## Regional Program Notice 21R01

Mr. John Sample  
123 Main Street  
Anywhere, USA 12345

Your Vehicle Identification Number (VIN): 12345678901234567

At Ford Motor Company, we are committed not only to building high quality, dependable products, but also to building a community of happy, satisfied customers. To demonstrate that commitment, we are providing a no-charge Customer Satisfaction Program for your vehicle with the VIN shown above.

### What is the issue?

Vehicles exposed to a corrosive environment where road salt is used extensively during winter months could experience a seized rear suspension toe link ball joint resulting in a fractured rear suspension toe link.

Our records show that your vehicle is not registered in an area where road salt is used extensively during the winter months. No action is necessary on your part unless one of the following situations is true.

- Your vehicle is located in a high corrosion area where road salt is used extensively during the winter months.
- You intend to operate your vehicle in a high corrosion area.
- You have concerns related to your rear toe links.

### What is the risk?

A rear toe link fracture may cause a loss of steering control, increasing the risk of a crash.

### What will Ford and your dealer do?

Ford Motor Company has authorized your dealer to install updated rear toe links free of charge (parts and labor) under the terms of 21R01.

Additionally, for customers who receive the updated rear toe links under program 21R01 prior to July 31, 2023 and subsequently have a knocking noise coming from a rear suspension toe link ball joint. Ford Motor Company will provide a no-cost, one-time repair to both toe link ball joints under customer satisfaction program 22N01. Eligibility will expire six (6) months from the Repair Order date of 21R01.

- How long will it take?** The time needed for this repair is less than one-half day. However, due to service scheduling requirements, your dealer may need your vehicle for a longer period of time.
- What should you do?** If any of the following situations apply to you, please call your dealer without delay to schedule a service appointment for Regional Program 21R01.
- Your vehicle is located in a high corrosion area where road salt is used extensively during the winter months.
  - You intend to operate your vehicle in a high corrosion area.
  - You have concerns related to your rear toe links.
- Provide the dealer with your VIN, which is printed near your name at the beginning of this letter.
- If you do not already have a servicing dealer, you can access [ford.com/support](https://ford.com/support) for dealer addresses, maps, and driving instructions.
- Ford Motor Company wants you to have this service action completed on your vehicle. The vehicle owner is responsible for making arrangements to have the work completed.
- NOTE: You can receive information about Recalls and Customer Satisfaction Programs through our FordPass App. The app can be downloaded through the App Store or Google Play. In addition there are other features such as reserving parking in certain locations and controlling certain functions on your vehicle (lock or unlock doors, remote start) if it is equipped to allow control.
- Have you previously paid for this repair?** If you have previously paid for a repair that addresses the issue described in this letter, you still need to have this service action performed to ensure the correct parts were used.
- If the previously paid for repair was performed before the date of this letter, you may be eligible for a refund. Refunds will only be provided for service related to rear toe link replacement due to fracture. To verify eligibility and expedite reimbursement, give your paid original receipt to your dealer before March 31, 2023. To avoid delays, do not send receipts to Ford Motor Company.
- What if you no longer own this vehicle?** If you no longer own this vehicle, and have an address for the current owner, please forward this letter to the new owner.
- You received this notice because government regulations require that notification be sent to the last known owner of record. Our records are based primarily on state registration and title data, which indicate that you are the current owner.
- Can we assist you further?** If you have difficulties getting your vehicle repaired promptly and without charge, please contact your dealership's Service Manager for assistance.
- RETAIL OWNERS:** If you have questions or concerns, please contact our **Ford Customer Relationship Center at 1-866-436-7332** and one of our representatives will be happy to assist you. If you wish to contact us through the Internet, our address is: [ford.com/support](https://ford.com/support).

For the hearing impaired call 1-800-232-5952 (TDD). Representatives are available Monday through Friday: 8:00AM - 8:00PM (Eastern Time).

FLEET OWNERS: If you have questions or concerns, please contact our **Ford Pro Contact Center at 1-800-34-FLEET**, choose Option #1, and one of our representatives will be happy to assist you. If you wish to contact us through the Internet, our address is: [fleet.ford.com](https://fleet.ford.com).

Representatives are available Monday through Friday: 7:00AM - 11:00PM and Saturday 7:00AM – 5:00PM (Eastern Time).

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Ford Customer Service Division