

*Ford Motor Company*

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OFFICE  
SALES & SERVICE

James P. Vondale, Director  
Automotive Safety Office  
Environmental & Safety Engineering

July 9, 2001

Mr. Kenneth Weinstein  
Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

01V-230 ①

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

Re: Ford Recall No. 01S22 – 1996 through 1998 Model Year Ford Contour/Mercury Mystique and 1999 Model Year Mercury Cougar Heater Blower Resistor

Summary

- Ford Action – Ford is conducting a voluntary safety recall to install a heater blower resistor on affected vehicles to prevent overheated components from potentially causing a fire.
- Number of Vehicles Involved – 335,532 Contours/Mystiques and 7,430 Cougars.
- Affect on Vehicle Operation – The heater blower resistor may overheat causing the attached electrical connector to melt, creating the potential for a fire. Ford is not aware of any accident or injury related to this issue.
- Service Procedure – Dealers will install a new heater blower resistor and a new wire jumper harness in the affected vehicles.

Also, for the Agency's information, in a separate action Ford will notify all owners of 1995 through 1997 Contour/Mystique built from August 1, 1994 through February 7, 1997 of a customer satisfaction program (01M07) in which Ford will provide additional warranty coverage for the heater blower switch for 10 years from original date of sale of a vehicle or 150,000 miles, whichever comes first. This vehicle population partially overlaps the 01S22 vehicle population.

Attached is the detailed information required by the applicable portions of 49 CFR Part 573 – Defect and Non-Compliance Information Report.

Sincerely,

*J. P. Vondale*  
James P. Vondale

Attachment  
01S22



## ATTACHMENT

**49 CFR Part 573 – DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT**  
**01S22 – 1996 THROUGH 1998 MODEL YEAR CONTOUR/MYSTIQUE and 1999 MODEL**  
**YEAR COUGAR HEATER BLOWER RESISTOR**

Pursuant to Part 573 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Defect and Noncompliance Reports, Ford Motor Company submits the following information concerning a safety recall action that it is voluntarily initiating.

**573.5 (c) (2) – Potentially Affected Vehicles**

Certain 1996 through 1998 model year Ford Contour/Mercury Mystique vehicles built from June 1, 1996 through May 31, 1998, and certain 1999 model year Mercury Cougar vehicles built from December 6, 1997 through May 31, 1998.

Because 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 (1-800-392-3673) or contacting a local Ford dealer, who can obtain specific information regarding the vehicles from the Ford On-line Automotive Service Information System (OASIS) database.

**573.5 (c) (3) – Estimated Population of Vehicles Potentially Affected**

Approximately 342,962 vehicles.

**573.5 (c) (4) – Estimated Percentage of Affected Vehicles with the Defect Condition**

Unknown.

**573.5 (c) (5) – Description of the Defect**

The rough surface of the resistor's stainless steel blades can damage the copper surface of the wiring harness connector. The damage may, over time, cause increased resistance in the connector and, due to subsequent terminal relaxation, result in an open circuit condition. The open circuit may lead to electrical arcing that may melt the connector housing material creating the potential for a fire. Ford is not aware of any accident or injury related to this issue.

**573.5 (c) (6) – Chronology of Events**

NHTSA opened a PE investigation on June 14, 2000 based on 28 reports of heater blower switch and/or resistor failures on 1996 through 1998 model year Contour/Mystique vehicles. Ford provided a response to NHTSA's PE inquiry on July 27, 2000. Ford also conducted an extensive investigation beginning with NHTSA's PE and ultimately concluded that the switch was not a fire source and that the resistor was potentially involved in 27 fires. These conclusions were reviewed with the Agency at a quarterly review meeting on May 14, 2001.

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**573.5 (c) (8) – Service Program**

Owners of the affected vehicles will be requested to return vehicles to dealers for the installation of a heater blower resistor and wiring jumper harness. There will be no charge to owners for this service. Ford anticipates that owner notification will begin the week of August 6, 2001.

**573.5 (c) (9) – Press Statement and Dealer/Owner Letters**

Ford does not plan to make a public statement concerning the subject matter of this action. A copy of the notification letters to dealers and owners from Ford Customer Service Division will be forwarded to the Agency when available.

**573.6 (c) (11) – Recall Number**

Ford has assigned campaign number 01S22 (Safety Recall) to this action.