

JAN - 5 2005



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration**

400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20580

**CERTIFIED MAIL**  
**RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

Mr. James Vondale, Director  
Automotive Safety Office  
Environmental and Safety Engineering  
Ford Motor Company  
330 Town Center Drive, Suite 400  
Dearborn, MI 48126

NVS-213gem  
EA04-025

Dear Mr. Vondale:

The Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is conducting an Engineering Analysis (EA04-025) of False Park conditions in certain Model Year (MY) 2003-2004 Dodge 2500/3500 Ram ¾- and 1- ton pickup trucks equipped with automatic transmissions. Consumer complaints collected during the course of this investigation allege that subject vehicles which have been apparently shifted into Park with the engine running may inadvertently shift into Reverse, leading to a powered rollaway. In many cases, the rollaway occurs after the vehicle operator exits the vehicle. ODI is requesting related peer vehicle information from the Ford Motor Company to support a comparative study of the subject Dodge ¾- and 1- ton pickup trucks.

Unless otherwise stated in the text, the following definitions apply to these information requests:

- **Subject vehicles:** all MY 2003-2004 F-250 and F-350 Superduty pickup trucks equipped with automatic transmissions manufactured for sale or lease in the United States.
- **Ford:** Ford Motor Company, all of its past and present officers and employees, whether assigned to its principal offices or any of its field or other locations, including all of its divisions, subsidiaries (whether or not incorporated) and affiliated enterprises and all of their headquarters, regional, zone and other offices and their employees, and all agents, contractors, consultants, attorneys and law firms and other persons engaged directly or indirectly (e.g., employee of a consultant) by or under the control of Ford (including all business units and persons previously referred to), who are or, in or after January 1, 1996, were involved in any way with any of the following related to the subject condition in the subject vehicles:



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888-327-4238

- a. Design, engineering, analysis, modification or production (e.g. quality control);
  - b. Testing, assessment or evaluation;
  - c. Consideration, or recognition of potential or actual defects, reporting, record-keeping and information management, (e.g., complaints, field reports, warranty information, part sales), analysis, claims, or lawsuits; or
  - d. Communication to, from or intended for zone representatives, fleets, dealers, or other field locations, including but not limited to people who have the capacity to obtain information from dealers.
- **Alleged defect:** Inadvertent movement, either powered or un-powered, of the vehicle, either attended or unattended, while parked. This includes incidents in which drivers claim that the gearshift lever and/or gearshift (PRNDL) indicator was in Park, regardless of whether or not the transmission parking pawl was fully engaged.
  - **Document:** "Document(s)" is used in the broadest sense of the word and shall mean all original written, printed, typed, recorded, or graphic matter whatsoever, however produced or reproduced, of every kind, nature, and description, and all non-identical copies of both sides thereof, including, but not limited to, papers, letters, memoranda, correspondence, communications, electronic mail (e-mail) messages (existing in hard copy and/or in electronic storage), faxes, mailgrams, telegrams, cables, telex messages, notes, annotations, working papers, drafts, minutes, records, audio and video recordings, data, databases, other information bases, summaries, charts, tables, graphics, other visual displays, photographs, statements, interviews, opinions, reports, newspaper articles, studies, analyses, evaluations, interpretations, contracts, agreements, jottings, agendas, bulletins, notices, announcements, instructions, blueprints, drawings, as-builts, changes, manuals, publications, work schedules, journals, statistical data, desk, portable and computer calendars, appointment books, diaries, travel reports, lists, tabulations, computer printouts, data processing program libraries, data processing inputs and outputs, microfilms, microfiches, statements for services, resolutions, financial statements, governmental records, business records, personnel records, work orders, pleadings, discovery in any form, affidavits, motions, responses to discovery, all transcripts, administrative filings and all mechanical, magnetic, photographic and electronic records or recordings of any kind, including any storage media associated with computers, including, but not limited to, information on hard drives, floppy disks, backup tapes, and zip drives, electronic communications, including but not limited to, the Internet and shall include any drafts or revisions pertaining to any of the foregoing, all other things similar to any of the foregoing, however denominated by Ford, any other data compilations from which information can be obtained, translated if necessary, into a usable form and any other documents. For purposes of this request, any document, which contains any note, comment, addition, deletion, insertion, annotation, or otherwise comprises a non-identical copy of another document shall be treated as a separate document subject to production. In all cases where original and any non-identical copies are not available, "document(s)" also means any identical copies of the original and all non-identical copies thereof. Any document, record, graph, chart, film or photograph originally produced in color must be provided in color. Furnish all documents whether verified by Ford or not.

If a document is not in the English language, provide both the original document and an English translation of the document.

- **Other Terms:** To the extent that they are used in these information requests, the terms "claim," "consumer complaint," "dealer field report," "field report," "fire," "fleet," "good will," "make," "model," "model year," "notice," "property damage," "property damage claim," "rollover," "type," "warranty," "warranty adjustment," and "warranty claim," whether used in singular or in plural form, have the same meaning as found in 49 CFR 579.4.

In order for my staff to evaluate the alleged defect, please provide numbered responses to the following information requests. Insofar as Ford has previously provided a document to ODI, Ford may produce it again or identify the document, the document submission to ODI in which it was included and the precise location in that submission where the document is located. When documents are produced, the documents shall be produced in an identified, organized manner that corresponds with the organization of this information request letter (including all individual requests and subparts). When documents are produced and the documents would not, standing alone, be self-explanatory, the production of documents shall be supplemented and accompanied by explanation.

Please repeat the applicable request verbatim above each response. After Ford's response to each request, identify the source of the information and indicate the last date the information was gathered.

1. State, by model and model year, the number of subject vehicles Ford has manufactured for sale or lease in the United States. Separately, for each subject vehicle manufactured to date by Ford, state the following:
  - a. Vehicle identification number (VIN);
  - b. Model;
  - c. Transmission model;
  - d. Two wheel or four wheel drive;
  - e. Transmission shift location (floor or steering column);
  - f. PRNDL indicator style (electronic or mechanical);
  - g. Date of manufacture;
  - h. Date warranty coverage commenced, and
  - i. The zip code in the United States where the vehicle was originally sold or leased (or delivered for sale or lease).

Provide this information in Microsoft Access 2003, or a compatible format, entitled "EA04-025 FORD PICKUPS PRODUCTION DATA." See Enclosure 1, EA04-025 Data Collection Disc, for pre-formatted tables that provide further details regarding this submission.

2. State the number of each of the following, received by Ford, or of which Ford is otherwise aware, which relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles:
  - a. Consumer complaints, including those from fleet operators;
  - b. Field reports, including dealer field reports;

- c. Reports involving a crash, injury, or fatality, based on claims against the manufacturer involving a death or injury, notices received by the manufacturer alleging or proving that a death or injury was caused by a possible defect in a subject vehicle, property damage claims, consumer complaints, or field reports;
- d. Property damage claims; and
- e. Third-party arbitration proceedings where Ford is or was a party to the arbitration; and lawsuits, both pending and closed, in which Ford is or was a defendant or codefendant.

For subparts "a" through "e", state the total number of each item (e.g., consumer complaints, field reports, etc.) separately. Multiple incidents involving the same vehicle are to be counted separately. Multiple reports of the same incident are also to be counted separately (i.e., a consumer complaint and a field report involving the same incident in which a crash occurred are to be counted as a crash report, a field report and a consumer complaint).

In addition, for items "c" through "e", provide a summary description of the alleged problem and causal and contributing factors and Ford's assessment of the problem, with a summary of the significant underlying facts and evidence. For items d and e, identify the parties to the action, as well as the caption, court, docket number, and date on which the complaint or other document initiating the action was filed.

3. Separately, for each item (complaint, report, claim, notice, or matter) within the scope of your response to Request No. 2, state the following information:
  - a. Ford's file number or other identifier used;
  - b. The category of the item, as identified in Request No. 2 (i.e., consumer complaint, field report, etc.);
  - c. Vehicle owner or fleet name (and fleet contact person), address, and telephone number;
  - d. Vehicle's VIN;
  - e. Vehicle's make, model and model year;
  - f. Vehicle's mileage at time of incident;
  - g. Incident date;
  - h. Report or claim date;
  - i. Whether a crash is alleged;
  - j. Whether property damage is alleged;
  - k. Where an item was struck, identify the item;
  - l. Number of alleged injuries, if any; and
  - m. Number of alleged fatalities, if any.

Provide this information in Microsoft Access 2003, or a compatible format, entitled "EA04-025 FORD PICKUPS REQUEST NUMBER TWO DATA." See Enclosure 1, EA04-025 Data Collection Disc, for a pre-formatted table that provides further details regarding this submission.

4. Produce copies of all documents related to each of items "c" through "e" within the scope of Request No. 2. Organize the documents separately by category (i.e., crash/injury/fatality reports, property damage claims, etc.) and describe the method Ford used for organizing the documents.

5. State, by model and model year, a total count for all of the following categories of claims, collectively, that have been paid by Ford to date that relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles: warranty claims; extended warranty claims; claims for good will services that were provided; field, zone, or similar adjustments and reimbursements; and warranty claims or repairs made in accordance with a procedure specified in a technical service bulletin or customer satisfaction campaign. Separately, for each such claim, state the following information:
- Ford's claim number;
  - Vehicle owner or fleet name (and fleet contact person) and telephone number;
  - VIN;
  - Repair date;
  - Vehicle mileage at time of repair;
  - Repairing dealer's or facility's name, telephone number, city and state or ZIP code;
  - Labor operation number;
  - Problem code;
  - Replacement part number(s) and description(s);
  - Concern stated by customer; and
  - Comment, if any, by dealer/technician relating to claim and/or repair.

Provide this information in Microsoft Access 2003, or a compatible format, entitled "EA04-025 FORD PICKUPS WARRANTY DATA." See Enclosure 1, EA04-025 Data Collection Disc, for a pre-formatted table that provides further details regarding this submission.

6. Describe in detail the search criteria used by Ford to identify the claims identified in response to Request No. 5, including the labor operations, problem codes, part numbers and any other pertinent parameters used. Provide a list of all labor operations, labor operation descriptions, problem codes, and problem code descriptions applicable to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles in Microsoft Access 2003, or a compatible format. State, by make and model year, the terms of the new vehicle warranty coverage offered by Ford on the subject vehicles (i.e., the number of months and mileage for which coverage is provided and the vehicle systems that are covered).
7. Produce copies of all service, warranty, and other documents that relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles, that Ford has issued to any dealers, regional or zone offices, field offices, fleet purchasers, or other entities. This includes, but is not limited to, bulletins, advisories, informational documents, training documents, or other documents or communications, with the exception of standard shop manuals. Also include the latest draft copy of any communication that Ford is planning to issue within the next 120 days.
8. Identify, describe, and provide copies of all engineering standards, design guidelines, and specifications that relate in any way to the potential for the vehicle operator to achieve a shift position between Reverse and Park in the gear selector assemblies of the automatic transmissions used in the subject peer vehicles. This should include a short description and photograph of the contour of the "rooster comb" manual detent lever in these transmissions.

9. Supply a photograph of each different shifter and PRNDL indicator arrangement used in the subject vehicles.
10. Provide a Park-Reverse and a Reverse-Park shift sequence chart identifying the status of significant components within the subject vehicles' transmission shift systems based on either manual shaft rotational displacement (steering column-mounted shifters) or shift handle linear displacement (console or floor-mounted shifters). The chart should identify the status of the PRNDL readout, engagement/disengagement of the Park and Reverse gates, park pawl position, and the energizing/de-energizing of any related hydraulic circuits. Representative diagrams are found in Enclosure 1.

If Ford cannot respond to any specific request or subpart(s) thereof, please state the reason why it is unable to do so. If on the basis of attorney-client, attorney work product, or other privilege, Ford does not submit one or more requested documents or items of information in response to this information request, Ford must provide a privilege log identifying each document or item withheld, and stating the date, subject or title, the name and position of the person(s) from, and the person(s) to whom it was sent, and the name and position of any other recipient (to include all carbon copies or blind carbon copies), the nature of that information or material, and the basis for the claim of privilege and why that privilege applies.

Ford's response to this letter, in duplicate, together with a copy of any confidentiality request, must be submitted to this office by **February 22, 2005**. Please refer to **EA04-025** in Ford's response to this letter. If Ford finds that it is unable to provide all of the information requested within the time allotted, Ford must request an extension from Mr. Jeff Quandt at (202) 366-5207 no later than five business days before the response due date. If Ford is unable to provide all of the information requested by the original deadline, it must submit a partial response by the original deadline with whatever information Ford then has available, even if an extension has been granted.

If Ford claims that any of the information or documents provided in response to this information request constitute confidential commercial material within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(4), or are protected from disclosure pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1905, Ford must submit supporting information together with the materials that are the subject of the confidentiality request, in accordance with 49 CFR Part 512, as amended (68 Fed. Reg. 44209 et seq; July 28, 2003), to the Office of Chief Counsel (NCC-113), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5219, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Ford is required to submit two copies of the documents containing allegedly confidential information (except only one copy of blueprints) and one copy of the documents from which information claimed to be confidential has been deleted. We request, but do not require, that Ford provide a Bates stamp number or other means of identification for each document in its confidential submission.

If you have any technical questions concerning this matter, please call Mr. Greg Magno of my staff at (202) 366-0139.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. DeMester', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kathleen C. DeMester, Office Director  
Office of Defects Investigation

Enclosure 1, One CD ROM titled Data Collection Disc containing four files