

Chronology – 14S22

July 2014: Ford began an analysis of fuel tank corrosion in these vehicles after receiving a report from the field. Ford was also contacted by Transport Canada regarding five reports they had received.

August – October 2014: The issue was opened in Ford's Critical Concern Review Group (CCRG) for further analysis in August. Ford reviewed reports from our field data systems to understand the symptoms, nature, and frequency of the concern. Ford also reviewed the manufacturing process of the fuel tank and design change history.

Ford gathered fuel tanks from the field for analysis. Analysis of these tanks found that leaks resulted from road salt induced corrosion. This analysis identified that the process of welding the upper and lower fuel tank halves together removes the corrosion protection along the weld seam at the perimeter of the tank. The weld seam is then covered by the fuel tank mounting reinforcement brackets (spot welded on) at the four corners of the tank. Salt and water, in combination, can corrode the unprotected metal at the weld seam. The corrosion then migrates from under the reinforcement bracket to the fuel tank. Variation in the spot welding and post-paint processes affects the likelihood of a gap occurring between the bracket and flange and consequently affects the propensity for a tank to experience this concern.

Analysis of reports also found this is a corrosion state related concern. As of October 6, 2014, Ford had identified 363 unique reports in our data systems that may relate to corrosion related fuel tank leaks, the vast majority pertaining to vehicles from corrosion states. The few reports of odor or leak received on vehicles outside of corrosion states, were generally non-descript and most occurred at low time in service, indicating that the cause of the fuel odor or leak, while unknown, was unlikely corrosion related.

In reviewing the reports from the field, most customers observe either the MIL or fuel odor and bring the vehicle for service. One allegation of a fire was identified, though it is unclear whether it pertains to this subject, and the customer indicated that the vehicle was repairable. No reports of injury were identified.

On October 21, 2014, Ford's Field Review Committee reviewed the concern and approved a safety recall for vehicles currently registered or originally sold in specified corrosion states. Although this corrosion related condition is not expected to exist in non-corrosion areas, on October 21, 2014, Ford's Field Review Committee also approved a field service program (14R02) for vehicles in non-corrosion areas to address potential customer concerns.