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September 4, 2012

Ms. Nancy Lewis
Associate Administrator for Enforcement
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Room W45-306
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Ms. Lewis:

Subject: Ford Motor Company (Ford) Recall No. 12S39 – Certain 2013 model year Escape vehicles equipped with 1.6L engines – engine cylinder head cup plug

Summary

- Ford Action – Ford is conducting a voluntary safety recall involving certain 2013 model year Escape vehicles equipped with 1.6L engines that have a cup plug that may not be fully secured in the engine cylinder head.
- Number of Vehicles Involved – Approximately 6,146 vehicles in the United States and federalized territories are potentially affected.
- Effect on Vehicle Operation – Certain 2013 model year Escape vehicles equipped with 1.6L engines may have a cylinder head cup plug that may become dislodged. A dislodged cylinder head cup plug will allow loss of engine coolant. This may result in subsequent engine overheating, which may be associated with instrument cluster gage, tell-tale, and message warnings. Under certain circumstances with massive coolant loss from the head cup plug bore, water in the 50/50 coolant mix may vaporize, resulting in a higher concentration of glycol (antifreeze). This would be most likely under a high engine load operating condition.

Ford is not aware of any field reports of fires in the United States on vehicles in customer service due to this cause. Ford is aware of one field report of a pre-delivery vehicle fire in Tennessee believed to be the result of the head cup plug becoming dislodged. A vehicle in the custody of the assembly plant also experienced a fire that may relate to a dislodged cup plug.

- Service Procedure – Owners will be notified by mail and instructed to take their vehicle(s) to a Ford or Lincoln dealer who will apply a wicking sealant to the cup plug and install a secondary cylinder head plug over the original cup plug with adhesive.

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

Sincerely,


Steven M. Kenner
Attachment



49 CFR PART 573 – DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT
12S39 – CERTAIN 2013 ESCAPE VEHICLES WITH 1.6L ENGINES –
ENGINE HEAD CUP PLUG

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

573.6 (c) (2) – Potentially Affected Vehicles

Vehicles potentially affected are certain 2013 model year Escape vehicles equipped with 1.6L engines built at Louisville Assembly Plant (LAP) from October 5, 2011, to August 31, 2012.

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.

The 1.6L engine is manufactured at the Ford Bridgend Engine Plant (BEP).

573.6 (c) (3) – Estimated Population of Vehicles Potentially Affected

Approximately 6,146 vehicles in the United States and federalized territories are potentially affected.

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

It is expected that less than 0.4% of the affected vehicles will be affected.

573.6 (c) (5) – Description of the Defect

Certain 2013 model year Escape vehicles equipped with 1.6L engines may have a cylinder head cup plug that may become dislodged. Dislodging of the cylinder head cup plug will result in loss of engine coolant. This may result in subsequent engine overheating, which may be associated with instrument cluster gage, tell-tale, and message warnings. Under certain circumstances with massive coolant loss from the head cup plug bore, water in the 50/50 coolant mix may vaporize, resulting in a higher concentration of glycol (antifreeze). This would be most likely under a high engine load operating condition.

Ford is not aware of any field reports of fires in the United States on vehicles in customer service due to this cause. Ford is aware of one field report of a pre-delivery vehicle fire in Tennessee believed to be the result of the head cup plug becoming dislodged. A vehicle in the custody of the assembly plant also experienced a fire that may relate to a dislodged cup plug.

573.6 (c) (6) – Chronology of Events

On August 8, 2012, the Ford regional office in Tennessee was contacted by a dealer reporting an underhood fire which occurred at a Ford dealership in Nashville, Tennessee during a pre-delivery drive. Subsequent investigation of the vehicle incident identified the dislodging of a 1.6L engine cylinder head cup plug as the cause of the fire.

Ford reviewed the underhood fire incidents that were identified in the investigation that led to Ford field service action 12S37 and the July 11, 2012 incident vehicle, being driven from LAP to Kentucky Truck Plant by a Ford employee, was found to have the cylinder head cup plug missing.

Testing conducted by Ford identified that under certain circumstances, a massive coolant loss from the 1.6L engine cylinder head cup plug bore could result in the water in the 50/50 coolant mix to vaporize, increasing the concentration of ethylene glycol to the point that it could combust.

Review of the repair processes at BEP identified the potential for a manual insertion of the cylinder head cup plug in a way that could affect the retention of the plug during vehicle operation.

On August 27, 2012, Ford's Field Review Committee reviewed the concern and approved a field action.

573.6 (c) (8) – Service Program

Owners will be notified by mail and instructed to take their vehicle(s) to a Ford or Lincoln dealer who will apply a wicking sealant to the cup plug and install a secondary cylinder head plug over the original cup plug with adhesive. There will be no charge to owners for this service.

Notification to dealers will occur on September 5, 2012. Owner notification letters will be mailed the week of September 10, 2012.

In accordance with Part 573.13(d)(1), Ford is excluding reimbursement for costs incurred by owners for repair of this concern because Ford's original warranty program would provide for a free repair for this concern for customers.

573.6 (c) (10) – Press Statement and Dealer/Owner Letters

National media attention is likely as with most Ford recalls when posted to NHTSA's safecar.gov website. Ford will provide public comments when requested. A news release will not be issued.

Ford will forward a copy of the notification letters to dealers and owners to the agency when available.

573.6 (c) (11) – Recall Number

Ford has assigned recall number 12S39 to this action.

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