



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

ODI RESUME

INVESTIGATION: EA02-023
DATE OPENED: 9/9/02
SUBJECT: Front Suspension Collapse and Wheel Separation
PROMPTED BY: PE02-044
PRINCIPAL ENGINEER: Christopher J. Santucci

MANUFACTURER: Ford
MODEL(S): Focus
MODEL YEAR(S): 2000-2002
VEHICLE POPULATION: 747,540

PROBLEM DESCRIPTION: Front suspension allegedly collapses or experiences wheel separation while driving.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	MANUFACTURER	TOTAL**
COMPLAINTS:	37	8	44
CRASHES:	18	1	18
INJ CRASHES:	2	0	2
# INJURIES:	2	0	2
FAT CRASHES	0	0	0
# FATALS	0	0	0
OTHER*	4	0	4

* Rollovers **Reflects total unique vehicle complaints and crashes

ACTION: The Engineering Analysis (EA) has been opened.

ENGINEER:

C. Santucci

DIV CHF:

J. DeMeyer

OFC DIR:

Revised for

K. DeMeyer

DATE:

9/6/02

DATE:

9/6/02

DATE:

9/9/02

SUMMARY: ODI has received thirty-seven complaints alleging that the front suspension experienced certain types of problems or failures. These allegations have included failures of the lower control arm, ball joint, and wheel bearing. Seventeen of these complaints have alleged that the front suspension failed and resulted in a crash. Four of these crashes were rollovers.

Initially, PE02-044 investigated the lower control arm and complaints of fracture. Vehicles in the field have been located that display various types of front suspension failures. Some have shown a separation of the front bushing from the lower control arm, fracture of the ball joint housing between the ball and lower control arm, or a separation of the strut from the axle spindle. Eighteen of these complaints alleged that without warning the front suspension failed and resulted in a crash. Two other complaints allege that they hit a curb or obstacle at low speed and the front suspension failed. Crashes were precipitated by allegations of the vehicle pulling hard in one direction or experiencing heavy vibrations.

More information is needed to determine whether a safety related defect exists, causing the failure of Ford Focus front suspensions. This investigation has been upgraded to an engineering analysis. The scope of the investigation has been changed to include all front suspension failures that lead to collapse or front wheel separation.

Handwritten initials/signature