

# CENTER FOR AUTO SAFETY

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May 3, 2011

Melanie Ann Pustay, Director  
Office of Information Policy  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Director Pustay:

Thank you for your April 15 response to our letter regarding violations of openness and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) policies on the part of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). We are very supportive and appreciative of the Attorney General's commitment to openness in government. This letter provides additional information on NHTSA's failure to provide the public with information on Death and Injury Inquiries (DI's). NHTSA actions with regard to the release of DI investigation documents runs counter to the agency's established policy of releasing information related to investigations undertaken by its enforcement division, the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI).

Attached please find screen captures of investigatory information currently available via NHTSA's website, where the agency releases all information requests and related correspondence from investigations into vehicle, tire, and equipment manufacturers. Currently, NHTSA releases this information for at least four categories of its defect investigation process. The Preliminary Evaluation (PE), Engineering Analysis (EA), Recall Query (RQ), and Audit Query (AQ) are four phases of NHTSA and ODI investigations for which the agency provides the public access to both the agencies activities and manufacturer submissions during the investigatory process.

As you can see from the attached screen captures, this information is relatively easy to access, unlike the process we described in our March 31 letter for acquiring information on NHTSA's DI investigations, which requires CAS to file FOIA requests that are met with protracted delays and fee requests. CAS contends that NHTSA should make information from DI investigations public in the same way that it does with all other phases of defects investigation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you office needs additional information on our request

Sincerely,



Michael Brooks  
Staff Attorney

# Preliminary Evaluation (PE)

Search for Defect Investig... x

www.odl.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/defect/defectsearch.cfm

safercar.gov

- File a Complaint
- Search Complaints
- Safety Recalls
- Defect Investigations
- Service Bulletins
- Resources

**Search for Defect Investigations**

The Investigations Search Engine will allow searches of current and past NHTSA investigations of vehicles, tires and equipment opened since 1972, by single year, make or model. An optional item of Vehicle Component may be selected to help narrow the focus of the search.

Either begin a search for an investigation below, or see [Defect Investigations from Prior Months](#)

Select >  Year  Make  Model  Component

**QUICK SEARCH**

NHTSA Action Number:  
(e.g. PE12345)

New Investigations  
Information since:

Show Full Summary:

**SELECT THE TYPE OF SEARCH**

Vehicle

Equipment

Child Restraint

Tires

**Frequently Asked Questions**  
Click here to see most frequently asked questions about Safety Ratings.

**Please note that documents, which are summarized on database searches, may be ordered from NHTSA Technical Information Services. Fees are involved in providing these documents. The following link describes TIS Fees. Also described is the TIS Reading Room, where visitors can view and/or copy documents and files.**

## Defect Investigations Results

- File a Complaint
- Search Complaints
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- Service Bulletins
- Resources

### Frequently Asked Questions

Get answers to the most frequently asked questions about defect investigations.



Report Date: May 3, 2011 at 11:04 AM

NHTSA Action Number: PE11003

NHTSA Action Number: PE11003

NHTSA Recall Campaign Number: N/A

Vehicle Make / Model:

FORD / FUSION

Model Year(s):

2010

Manufacturer: FORD MOTOR COMPANY

Component(s):

WHEELS; LUGS; NUTS; BOLTS

Date Investigation Opened: January 21, 2011

Date Investigation Closed: Open

#### Summary:

The Office of Defects Investigation is aware of four complaints on certain model year 2010 Ford Fusion vehicles that allege one or more wheel stud fractures. Three complaint vehicles belong to the same 22 vehicle fleet but were assigned to different drivers who experienced the alleged defect on three separate occasions. All four complaint vehicles had low mileage (between approximately 5,000 and 11,000 miles) and the wheels had never been serviced prior to the alleged incidents. The complaint vehicles were originally equipped with steel wheels and decorative wheel covers with each wheel affixed to the vehicle via five lug nuts and wheel studs. At least one complaint alleges wheel stud fractures on multiple wheels. Wheel stud fractures may result in wheel separation and loss of vehicle control. A Preliminary Evaluation has been opened to assess the alleged defect in the subject vehicles.

Document Search

Check to Request Research. Submit below.

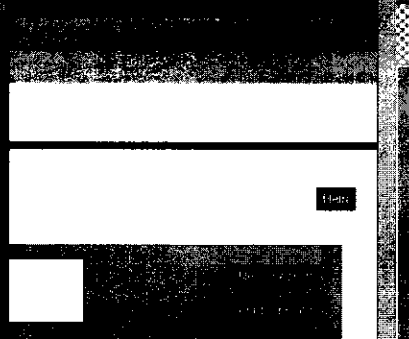
Request Research

### Defect Investigations Documents

**Search Results:**

Total items: 12

Name	Description	Size (KB)



Campaign Number : N/A

Model Year(s):  
2010

In model year 2010 Ford Fusion vehicles that to the same 22 vehicle fleet but were assigned occasions. All four complaint vehicles had low had never been serviced prior to the alleged and decorative wheel covers with each wheel nt alleges wheel stud fractures on multiple hicle control. A Preliminary Evaluation has

[Request Research](#)

# Engineering Analysis (EA)

Search for Defect Investig... x

www.oed.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/defect/defectsearch.cfm

safercar.gov

- File a Complaint
- Search Complaints
- Safety Recalls
- Defect Investigations
- Service Bulletins
- Resources

**Frequently Asked Questions**  
Get answers to the most frequently asked questions about Safety Ratings.

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Either begin a search for an Investigation below, or see [Defect Investigations from Prior Months](#)

Select:  Year  Make  Model  Component

### QUICK SEARCH

NHTSA Action Number:  
(e.g. PE00001)

New Investigations Search for recalls by NHTSA Campaign ID

Information since:

Show Full Summary:

[Prior Months Investigations](#)

### SELECT THE TYPE OF SEARCH

Vehicle  
 Equipment  
 Tires

Please note that documents, which are summarized on database searches, may be ordered from NHTSA Technical Information Services. Fees are involved in providing these documents. The following link describes TIS Fees. Also described is the TIS Reading Room, where visitors can view and/or copy documents and files.

- [File a Complaint](#)
- [Search Complaints](#)
- [Safety Recalls](#)
- [Defect Investigations](#)
- [Service Bulletins](#)
- [Resources](#)

**Frequently Asked Questions**  
 Get answers to the most frequently asked questions about Safety Ratings.

### Defect Investigations Results

Report Date : May 3, 2011 M 12:44 PM  
 NHTSA Advice Number : EA10001

NHTSA Action Number : EA10001      NHTSA Recall Campaign Number : 11V107000

<b>Vehicle Make / Model:</b>	<b>Model Year(s):</b>
FORD / F-150	2004-2008
FORD / F-150 HERITAGE	2004
FORD / F-150 LIGHTNING	2004
FORD / F150	2004-2008

Manufacturer : FORD MOTOR COMPANY

**Component(s):**  
 AIR BAGS  
 AIR BAGS:FRONTAL  
 AIR BAGS:FRONTAL-DRIVER SIDE INFLATOR MODULE  
 AIR BAGS:FRONTAL-SENSOR/CONTROL MODULE

Date Investigation Opened : January 13, 2010  
 Date Investigation Closed : April 26, 2011

**Summary:**  
 ODI opened this investigation based on reports of inadvertent airbag deployment. Data provided by Ford indicated that the airbag deodorizing jumper wire, which is situated inside the steering wheel assembly, was installed in a manner that would allow it to rub (abrade) against a sharp metal edge on the nearby horn plate. Because the horn plate is electrically grounded the abrasion of an airbag wire on the sharp edge could cause a short circuit condition. As a result the airbag light may illuminate and/or the airbag may inadvertently deploy. Inadvertent deployments are most likely to occur during the airbag system's self-diagnostic test that initiates when the ignition switch is turned on. Ford modified the vehicle design in late January 2008 adding a protective tape over the sharp metal edge of the horn plate. Ford made additional design changes on MY 2007 vehicles to the horn plate, the deodorizing jumper, and the connector layouts to further address this issue. ODI identified 318 deployment incidents with 121 alleged injury reports from subject vehicles. All but one of the incident and injury reports occurred in vehicles built before the January 2008 modification. In addition, there was one incident and alleged injury reported in the MY 2006 Mark LT vehicles that share the same design. In letters dated February 21 and April 11, 2011, Ford announced a recall of all of the approximately 1.3 million MY 2004-2008 F-150 vehicles built prior to January 24, 2008, the date the initial vehicle modification was made. In addition, approximately 14,000 MY 2006 Mark LT vehicles built prior to January 24, 2008 will also be recalled. Vehicles built after that date, which contain the modification, are not within the recall scope. Accordingly the investigation is closed.

Check to Request Research. Submit below.

**Search Results:**

Total Items: 34

Case No.	Case Title	Case Status

Number: 11V107000  
 Model Year(s):  
 2004-2008  
 2004  
 2004  
 2004-2008

Deployment. Data provided by Ford indicated  
 wheel assembly, was installed in a manner  
 y horn plate. Because the horn plate is  
 ed cause a short circuit condition. As a result  
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 gnition switch is turned on. Ford modified  
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 will also be recalled. Vehicles built after that date, which contain the modification, are not within the recall scope.  
 Accordingly the investigation is closed.

Check to Request Research. Submit below.

# Recall Query (RQ)

Search for Defect Investig... x

www.od.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/defect/defectsearch.cfm

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Vehicle Manufacturers

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Either begin a search for an investigation below, or see [Defect Investigations from Prior Months](#)

Select: Year Make Model Component

### QUICK SEARCH

NHTSA Action Number  
(e.g. P802001)

New Investigations:  
Information since:

Show Full Summary:

### SELECT THE TYPE OF SEARCH

- Vehicle
- Equipment
- Child Restraint
- Tires

Freely Asked Questions  
Be answer to the most frequently asked questions about Safety Recall

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File a Complaint

Search Complaints

Safety Recalls

Defect Investigations

Service Bulletins

Resources

Frequently Asked Questions

Go directly to the most frequently asked questions about Safety Rating



### Defect Investigations Results

Report Date : May 3, 2011 at 12:46 PM

NHTSA Action Number : RQ10001

View Search  
Print Page

NHTSA Action Number : RQ10001

NHTSA Recall Campaign Number : N/A

Vehicle Make / Model :

Model Year(s) :

HYUNDAI / 0V650

2007

Manufacturer : HYUNDAI MOTORS AMERICA INC.

Component(s) :

STEERING WHEEL AND HANDLE BAR

Date Investigation Opened : January 25, 2010

Date Investigation Closed : May 10, 2010

**Summary:**

In February 2007, Hyundai launched recall 07V-015 addressing fractures of handlebar fasteners on MY 2006 0V650 model motorcycles. In some instances, the handlebar could then separate from the front fork. DDI received a Vehicle Owner Questionnaire (VOQ) alleging a MY 2007 Hyundai 0V650 had the same issue, i.e., fractured handlebar retaining bolts. To explore the adequacy of Hyundai's recall scope, we opened this Recall Query (RQ). Since opening, we interviewed Hyundai dealer/service personnel, continued monitoring related web-forums and media, and reviewed Hyundai's response to our information request. Currently, we are only aware of the incident prompting this RQ and, consequently find no defect trend exists justifying expanding the scope of 07V-015 to include the 2007 model year 0V650's. Therefore, this Preliminary Evaluation is closed. We will continue to monitor these motorcycles for any changes in the complaint trends.

**Request Research**

Check to Request Research. Submit below.

**Request Research**

Defect Investigations Resu... x

Defect Investigations Documents | Safety | NHTSA | Google Chrome

www.od.nihsa.dot.gov/sms/documentList.do?docId=RQ10001&docType=INV&fromPublic=true

### Defect Investigations Documents

**Search Results:** Total Items: 3

Item	Doc ID	Doc Type

1 of 3 items

How Search  
Find

Campaign Number : N/A  
Model Year(s) : 2007

of handlebar fasteners on MY 2006  
separate from the front fork. DDI received a  
ad the same issue, i.e., fractured  
pe, we opened this Recall Query (RQ).  
d monitoring related web-forums and  
ly, we are only aware of the incident  
prompting the RQ and, consequently find no defect trend exists justifying expanding the scope of 07V-016 to include  
the 2007 model year QVDSOs. Therefore, this Preliminary Evaluation is closed. We will continue to monitor these  
motorcycles for any changes in the complaint trends.

Check to Request Research. Submit below.

# Audit Query (AQ)

Search for Defect Investg... x

www.cd.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/defect/defectsearch.cfm

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Either begin a search for an investigation below, or see [Defect Investigations from Prior Months](#)

Select:  Year  Make  Model  Component

### QUICK SEARCH

NHTSA Action Number:  
(e.g. PE0001)

New Investigational Information since:

Show Full Summary:

### SELECT THE TYPE OF SEARCH

- Vehicle
- Equipment
- Child Restraint
- Tires

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File a Complaint

Search Complaints

Safety Recalls

Defect Investigations

Service Bulletins

Resources

Frequently Asked Questions

Get answers to the most frequently asked questions about safety recalls



Report Date : May 3, 2011 at 12:49 PM

NHTSA Action Number : AQ09002

NHTSA Action Number : AQ00002

NHTSA Recall Campaign Number : N/A

Vehicle Make / Model:

Model Year(s):

HOLIDAY RAMBLER / ARISTA

2006-2008

HOLIDAY RAMBLER / ATLANTIS SE

2006-2008

HOLIDAY RAMBLER / SCEPTER

2006-2007

MONACO COACH / CAMELOT

2006-2007 2009

MONACO COACH / MONARCH

2007

SAFARI COACH / IVORY SE

2006-2008

SAFARI COACH / PASSAGE

2006-2008

Manufacturer : MONACO COACH CORPORATION

Component(s):

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM:FUSES AND CIRCUIT BREAKERS

EQUIPMENT:RECREATIONAL VEHICLE:LP GAS LINES AND FITTINGS

EXTERIOR LIGHTING

Date Investigation Opened : December 17, 2009

Date Investigation Closed : Open

Summary:

SEVERAL RECALL CAMPAIGNS INITIATED BY MONACO COACH CORPORATION (MONACO COACH) HAVE LOW COMPLETION RATES AND OVERDUE QUARTERLY REPORTING. RMD UNDERSTANDS THAT MONACO FILED FOR BANKRUPTCY AND THAT NAVISTAR, INC. (NAVISTAR) PURCHASED SOME OR ALL OF ITS ASSETS DURING THE COURSE OF THOSE PROCEEDINGS. RMD ALSO UNDERSTANDS THAT NAVISTAR CONTINUES TO MANUFACTURE MONACO BRAND VEHICLES THROUGH A NEW CORPORATION NAMED MONACO RV, LLC (MONACO RV), BUT HAS DISCLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY TO OWNERS FOR REMEDYING RECALLED MONACO COACH VEHICLES AT NO COST, OR FOR REPORTING ON THE STATUS OF RECALLS MONACO COACH INITIATED. THE PURPOSE OF THIS AUDIT QUERY IS TO INVESTIGATE THE STATUS OF MONACO COACH AND MONACO RV, LEARN WHAT THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THOSE COMPANIES AND NAVISTAR IS, AND DECIDE WHETHER MONACO RV AND/OR NAVISTAR CAN OR SHOULD BE OBLIGATED TO PROVIDE A FREE REMEDY TO OWNERS AND PROVIDE QUARTERLY REPORTS TO THE AGENCY, ON THOSE SAFETY RECALLS MONACO COACH INITIATED.

Check to Request Research. Submit below.

Request Research

### Defect Investigations Documents

**Search Results:** Total Items: 1

Name	Description	Year(s)

Year(s):  
Year(s):

- Campaign Number : N/A
- Model Year(s):  
2006-2006  
2006-2006  
2006-2007  
2006-2007 2006  
2007  
2006-2006  
2006-2006

INITIATED. THE PURPOSE OF THIS ADULT QUERY IS TO INVESTIGATE THE STATUS OF MONACO COACH AND MONACO RV, LEARN WHAT THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THOSE COMPANIES AND NAVISTAR IS, AND DECIDE WHETHER MONACO RV AND/OR NAVISTAR CAN OR SHOULD BE OBLIGATED TO PROVIDE A FREE REMEDY TO OWNERS AND PROVIDE QUARTERLY REPORTS TO THE AGENCY, ON THOSE SAFETY RECALLS MONACO COACH INITIATED.

Check to Request Research. Submit below.