

Feds Investigate Ford Police Car Steering Problem

Tom Krisher, AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Government safety regulators are investigating Ford's Crown Victoria police cars due to complaints about defective steering columns.

The probe affects about 195,000 cars from the 2005 through 2008 model years.

The government has received three complaints that part of the steering column can separate and cause loss of steering control. No crashes or injuries were reported, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said in documents posted Saturday on its website.

Investigators will determine if the cars have a safety defect and whether a recall is needed. So far the vehicles haven't been recalled.

Ford spokeswoman Susan Krusel said that the company is aware of the investigation and is cooperating. The investigation only affects police versions of the Crown Victoria, she said.

The Crown Victoria had been the police car of choice in the U.S. for 15 years before Ford Motor Co. stopped making it at the end of 2011. The Dearborn, Mich. company controlled 70 percent of the police car market and averaged sales of 50,000 per year. The company stopped production of the Crown Victoria late last year at its St. Thomas assembly plant near London, Ontario.

NHTSA said in the documents that two of the complaints involved police cars and one affected a local government vehicle. In all three cases, the steering column separations happened at low speeds. One complaint said steering effort increased just before the separation.

The government also has received 10 complaints that inspections found steering columns that were about to separate.

In one complaint, the driver reported that when the steering column separated, there was no mechanical connection to the front wheels.

"The operator was able to bring the vehicle to a safe stop, but they had just begun to accelerate from a traffic light when the shafts separated and the vehicle's speed was minimal," said the complaint, filed on May 18, 2010. NHTSA does not identify who filed a complaint.

The Montgomery County, Md., Police Department said earlier this week that it was inspecting its 324 Crown Victorias because of a steering problem with its cruisers.

Feds Investigate Ford Police Car Steering Problem

Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

Police said that since July, two cruisers were affected by the problem that had the potential to cause the steering to fail during normal operation. There were no crashes or injuries during the incidents. Police in Tucson, Ariz. also recently began inspecting its fleet of Crown Victorias. The police officer union says that at least six vehicles were found to be deficient and in need of repair. Tucson police said the department expects to conduct a more thorough investigation in the coming weeks.

Ford replaced the ubiquitous "Crown Vic" with a new police interceptor sedan based on the Ford Taurus. The new car has anti-stab plates built into the front seats to protect occupants from attacks, vinyl rear seats and floors that can be hosed down, and available bulletproof doors.

Source URL (retrieved on 04/27/2015 - 3:23pm):

<http://www.impomag.com/news/2012/09/feds-investigate-ford-police-car-steering-problem>