



# STATEMENT

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## **IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT OF SAFETY BELT ASSEMBLIES**

**DEARBORN, Mich., July 6, 2009** – Ford Motor Company encourages proper usage and repair of safety belts, the No. 1 life-saving device in automobiles, after the driver. Since Ford introduced the industry's first safety belts in the 1950s, the company has enhanced the feature with new technologies such as adaptive load-limiting retractors and pretensioners.

Load-limiting retractors can help reduce the force on the occupant's chest from the safety belt during a high-severity crash event by allowing a controlled release of webbing from the retractor. Pretensioners in the safety belt system can tighten the driver and right front passenger safety belts and enhance the overall protection that the safety belt system provides.

Ford recommends replacement of all safety belt assemblies in use at the time a vehicle is involved in an accident. However, if the collision was minor, Ford Motor Company describes recommended functional testing procedures for both shoulder harnesses, and lap belts and retractors in Ford factory service manuals. If a qualified technician finds that safety belt assemblies do not show damage and continue to operate properly per these functional test procedures, they do not need to be replaced. Safety belt assemblies not in use during a collision should also be inspected and replaced if either damage or improper operation is noted.

Before installing a new safety belt assembly, the safety belt attaching areas must be inspected for damage and distortion. If the attaching points are damaged or distorted, the sheet metal must be reworked to its

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original shape and structural integrity. In addition, be sure that if new safety belt service parts are needed, they are intended specifically for the vehicle in which they are being installed. Furthermore, Ford Motor Company does not approve the use of used restraint system modules, safety belts, buckles or retractors, from pre-owned, salvage or damaged vehicles. The use of such parts could lead to serious injury.

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