



Transmission Issues:

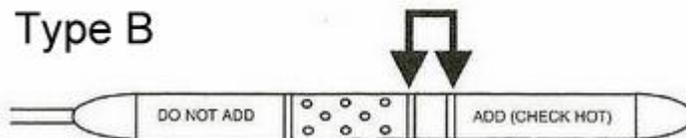
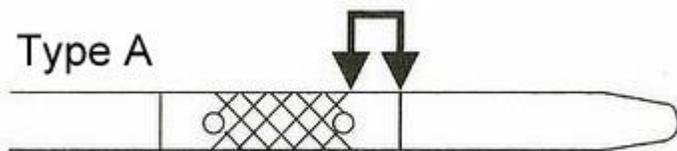
Ford Escape - Flat Towing Problems

In May 2010, I received a letter from Ford with a booklet entitled "Recreational (Flat) Towing and Transmission Fluid Level Supplement." Other than the new advice about putting the air conditioner in recirculated air mode to prevent exhaust fumes from entering the vehicle (which again is misleading because if you push that recirculate air button, it turns the A/C on, and you don't want anything on when towing), the rest of the supplement was all about the transmission fluid level.

There were pictures provided indicating too low, too high, and "just right" levels and how to read the dipstick. There are separate, different instructions and pictures for "Checking transmission fluid level for recreational flat tow operation."

The pictures below show the proper fluid level for recreational flat tow operation. The booklet says,

"Before recreational flat towing your vehicle, the transmission fluid level may need to be set to a lower level. These guidelines are designed to prevent damage to your transmission. Before you recreational flat tow, your fluid level must be verified by an authorized dealer. This fluid level is within the normal operating fluid range and does not require that you have your fluid level readjusted after recreational flat tow operation."



The booklet referred to two different types of dipsticks and showed how to check for both kinds.

When I first checked, I had the Type A dipstick. When I first started towing, I had 3 different techs check the level at different times when I started having problems and it was almost comical - all of them reached different conclusions - one said too low, one said too high, and the other "looks right to me."

None of them followed the instructions on how to get an accurate reading according to this booklet, though.

The booklet is very specific about the instructions on how to check the fluid to get an accurate reading:

- Check after driving the car 20 miles (to reach normal operating temperature)
- Park on level place, put in Park, engage parking brake and leave engine running.

Transmission fluid expands when warmed. If car has been operated for extended period at high speeds, in heavy traffic or during hot weather, turn off car for 30 minutes to allow fluid to cool before checking.

- Foot on brake pedal, start engine and move gearshift lever through all gear ranges, allowing time to fully engage in each gear.
- Remove dipstick and clean with dry, lint-free rag.
- Reinstall, making sure fully seated; remove & inspect for level.

The only tech who explained that you will get different readings if the car is not properly warmed and if the motor is not running while checking was Tim at Lugoff Ford, who performed the last repair that included the redesigned left axle assembly that had failed on me before.



He also installed the new dipstick, and it was only then that I realized it was a bigger deal than just a new dipstick, but included a newly redesigned tube assembly.

He explained that during flat towing, fluid expands and comes up through the vent and instead of venting into the tube it's now vented outside, preventing siphoning of the fluid and overflowing.



The new dipstick is so much easier to read.