

Malia Lane
(contact info redacted for website)

May 16, 2011

Mr. William Clay Ford, Jr.
Executive Chairman
Ford Motor Company
P.O. Box 6248
Dearborn, MI 48126-2798

Dear Mr. Ford,

Since I have not had the courtesy of a response from you to my letter of May 4 (enclosed), I'm going to try to continue to think positive and believe you thought one of your representatives from your Customer Relationship Center has responded on your behalf. But if that's your hope, I'm here to tell you that they are as dashed as mine are.

You can read a recap of the responses I've received via email from them in the copies I've enclosed from everyone I've dealt with at Ford about this matter. It actually became insulting to read the same exact "canned" expressions of concern from different people but basically saying the same thing. Never answering my direct questions, but either asking again for information I'd already provided and instructing me to "work with your dealer."

Alji's response said "inquiries of a technical nature are best referred to our dealerships because they have factory trained technicians and comprehensive service information that can address your concern." *Really?* Then we're in big trouble now because it was the service technician at Lugoff Ford who put my car up on the rack to inspect it, and then came back and presented me with two printed pages from an unknown manual and informed me that Ford does not authorize that car to be flat towed! When I showed him the official owner's manual for my car, along with the April 2010 subsequent bulletin with updated information on how to properly flat tow the car, he backed down from that position. But it did not raise my confidence in Ford to realize that even your own "factory trained technicians" are not properly informed about the products they sell and service.

Although Cathy at the Customer Care Department for the region where my car is now waiting to be serviced (Lugoff, SC) has been as helpful as she could be, I am a fulltime RVer traveling around the country with plans to leave this area next week. I want to work with an authorized representative from Ford on a corporate level with the authority to help me no matter where I am (including providing a comparable loaner car) without having to get new people up to speed on my situation.

Mr. Ford, I know you're the "main man" there and that you are really busy. I understand you have departments and representatives hired to take care of these "trivial" customer matters. But do you as a true Ford heir really care about your customers? Are you willing to contact me about any of these concerns or have someone with your full authority do so?

I know I've compiled a lot of material to digest in the enclosures. But this is my life I'm talking about here. As a fulltime RVer I need a car that can be towed. If Ford made a mistake in telling me you built one that fulfills that purpose, make me whole by taking this car back and either replacing it with a comparable Ford product that will or put me back in the same position I was in

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before I bought this 2009 Escape, with full compensation for the expenses of getting the new car prepared to be towed. That's the very least you can do given the amount of time and anxiety this has cost me already.

Is the RV market really of such little value to you that you can continue to ignore our concerns given Ford's representation about which of your cars are safe to flat tow? I can't find one official statement from Ford about these problems that many people are obviously experiencing given the activity on many RV forums, as well as Ford ForumsOnline.

With continued faith that you are interested in every aspect of your business, Mr. Ford, especially the safety and satisfaction of your customers...

Sincerely,

Malia Lane

Enclosures:

May 4, 2010 letter to you

Recap of other communications with Ford:

- Ford Customer Relationship Center (email)
- Customer Care Department (Cathy, Customer Specialist Manager for Lugoff Ford region)
- Lugoff Ford (servicing dealer)
- Leif Johnson Ford (selling dealer)
- @FordCustService (Twitter)

Questions for Ford

Malia Lane
(contact info redacted for website)

May 4, 2011

Mr. William Clay Ford, Jr.
Executive Chairman
Ford Motor Company
P.O. Box 6248
Dearborn, MI 48126-2798

Dear Mr. Ford,

Although I have addressed my concerns via the comment form on your website and Twitter, I am old fashioned enough to prefer to address a real letter to a real person. But besides that, my problems are of a pressing nature at this point and I am not at all assured that they will be addressed by these impersonal, anonymous methods. But I guess this is a long shot, too...

I am a solo female fulltime RVer travel writer. I bought a 2009 Ford Escape because of its ability to be flat towed behind a motorhome. I've towed it less than 2,000 miles now and even after the transmission was replaced in 2009 and the axle bushing, seal & axle assembly replaced in 2010, I am now being told my transmission shows early signs of failure and the same repairs need to be done again. I am meticulous about following the manual and the May 2010 supplemental bulletin's towing instructions. I flat towed a Saturn for 8 years with no problems at all before the Ford, so this is not a new concept for me.

I am on assignment for MotorHome magazine and will need to tow my car all over Michigan this summer. I am now in SC waiting yet again for the back ordered parts to be sent to the dealer. They cannot tell me how long it will take or that the car is safe to drive in the meantime.

I really need some top-dog help here, Mr. Ford. Most of the dealers and people I've talked to have been very nice, but the last person I talked to at Customer Service (Connor) was of no help whatsoever. And I need more than friendly voices or expressions of concern that you want to keep satisfied customers. As a woman traveling alone, driving a 36' motorhome towing a car, I have enough to worry about. I need assurance that I have a safe car that does what Ford says it was built to do. I can't afford to spend my time sitting in service centers while your engineers figure out how to fix a problem that should have been addressed a long time ago.

I've written about my experience with as much information as I can provide at <http://www.maliasmiles.com/blog/2009-ford-escape-dinghy/>. I beg you to please help me keep the faith in Ford and contact me with a real solution to this problem so I can go about my business in Michigan this summer without constantly worrying about my car giving out on me in the middle of the Upper Peninsula with limited resources. I hope and pray that a real person with a warm heart and real conscience receives this and is moved to provide some real help!

In a 11/15/2009 press release, you were quoted as saying "I want us to be a company that makes a difference in people's lives; one that delights its customers..." "to do that we are focused on delivering desirable products..."

So I beseech you, Mr. Ford, make a difference in this one woman's life. Deliver the desirable product I bought and help relieve the tension and anxiety I now feel with this unreliable car.

Malia Lane
cc: Customer Relationship Center

VIN # 1FMCU03739KA13400

2009 Ford Escape Towing Problems

Recap of Communications with Customer Relationship Center - (CRCFMC@Ford.com)

May 4, 2011 - my original concern sent via website form:

I am a solo female fulltime RVer travel writer. I bought a 2009 Ford Escape because of its ability to be flat towed behind a motorhome. I've towed it less than 2,000 miles now and even after the transmission was replaced in 2009 and the axle bushing, seal & axle assembly replaced in 2010, I am now being told my transmission shows early signs of failure and the same repairs needs to be done again. I am meticulous about following the manual and the May 2010 supplemental bulletin's towing instructions. I flat towed a Saturn for 8 years with no problems at all before the Ford, so this is not a new concept for me. I am on assignment for MotorHome magazine and will need to tow my car all over MI this summer. I am now in SC waiting yet again for the back ordered parts to be sent to the dealer in Lugoff. They cannot tell me how long it will take or assure me that the car is safe to drive in the meantime. I really need some top-dog help here, guys. Most of the dealers and Ford people I've talked to have been very nice, but the last person I talked to at Customer Service (Connor) was of no help whatsoever. And I need more than friendly voices or expressions of concern that you want to keep satisfied customers. As a woman traveling alone, driving a 36' motorhome towing a car, I have enough to worry about. I need assurance that I have a safe car that does what Ford says it was built to do. I can't afford to spend my time sitting in service centers while your engineers figure out how to fix a problem that should have been addressed a long time ago. I've written about my experience with as much information as I can provide at <http://www.maliasmiles.com/blog/2009-ford-escape-dinghy/>. I beg you to please help me keep the faith in Ford and contact me with a real solution to this problem so I can go about my business in Michigan this summer without constantly worrying about my car giving out on me in the middle of the Upper Peninsula with limited resources. I hope and pray that a real person with a warm heart and real conscience receives this and is moved to provide some real help!

May 5: (Paolo)

Hello Malia,

My name is Paolo with Ford's Customer Relationship Center and I received your email regarding the transmission concern on your 2009 Ford Escape. Customer satisfaction is the primary objective of Ford Motor Company and we make every attempt to ensure that our owners are satisfied. I would like to assist you; but in order to process your request more information is needed. Please reply to this e-mail with the following information that I need to proceed with an initial review of your case.

Exact odometer Reading:

Name and location of your Servicing Dealership:

Has the vehicle been diagnosed by a Ford/Lincoln-Mercury Dealership for the current issue?:

While I understand that this may cause some delay, this step is necessary to assure that your concern is addressed in the most appropriate manner. Thank you for contacting Ford.

My response:

Hello Paolo,

Thanks for your response. I assume this response is from the website form, but since then, I have started with techs from Ford's Twitter account @FordCustService.

Following is the information you requested in your email below. Please note all of this information and more can be found on my blog post originally referenced in my contact with you.

Exact odometer reading: 20,557.4

Current dealership:

Lugoff Ford
979 Hwy. 1 South
Lugoff, SC 29078
Service Rep: Paul Stewart (803-438-6124 ext. 112)

After putting the car up on the rack, service tech Bob said he could see "early signs of transmission failure." He said the left axle is loose where it goes into the transmission and that failure may be prevented by replacing transmission axle bushing and seal.

This same repair was done a little over a year ago at Robinson Ford in Baton Rouge, LA on February 19, 2010. It was then that I heard the entire transmission on the car had been replaced in April, 2009 prior to my ownership of the car. I purchased it on November 19, 2009.

As I've explained to everyone from day one, the only reason I bought this car was because of the dealer and Ford's representation that it could safely be flat towed. I now have little faith in this and am extremely worried about towing this car.

I am carefully and completely documenting all communications with Ford about this issue and have prepared a detailed timeline. All of this information can be accessed from my blog at <http://www.maliasmiles.com/blog/2009-ford-escape-dinghy/>.

Let me know if you need anything further. I don't want to cause Ford any duplicate efforts, so if I should continue to work with you instead of the representatives from Twitter, or if I should just continue to work with them, please let me know.

Best regards,
Malia Lane

Monday, May 9: (Kristian)

Hello Malia,

I sincerely understand the frustration that this experience has brought you. Ford Motor Company is concerned with the satisfaction of all Ford and Lincoln Mercury owners. I have personally looked into our records and verified that your case is currently being handled by our Customer Care Solutions Team. A follow-up call will be made to you on May 13, 2011 by 5pm EST. Please allow the requested time for the follow up to occur so that your issue may be properly addressed.

On behalf of Ford Motor Company as a whole, I truly regret the circumstances which caused you to write. I hope that with the Customer Care Solutions Team's assistance, this matter will be rectified in an expedient manner.

Thank you Malia, for your extended patience.

Sincerely,
Kristian
Customer Relationship Center
Ford Motor Company

My response:

Hello Kristian,

Besides the email communications below, the only other contact I've had is via Ford reps on Twitter. However, that way of communication is not very efficient due to the 140 character limit. So I'd like to consolidate all my communication with Ford through you in this email format.

The last I heard from the dealer in Lugoff is that the part should be delivered to them this week. Your message below says I would be contacted again on the 13th. I was told by the reps via Twitter that they would have an engineer "provide assurance that you'll be able to safely tow your Escape." No word from anyone else at this point.

But at this point, following my research and comments from other owners, these are the questions I want addressed at this time:

1. Why was the transmission replaced in my car in April 2009? This was before I bought it in November. As far as I can tell, the car had not been towed by previous owner, so why did the transmission need to be replaced at that time?
2. Does my Escape have the 6F35 type transmission? I've read about potential class action litigation regarding this but that an added baffle was supposed to have cured this.
3. Regarding this "modified baffle" - I've read this was installed beginning with transmission build date of Feb. 8, 2010 that diverts oil differently than the baffle that was originally installed for this purpose. There was no recall to replace this baffle in vehicles built prior to this date but info said Ford will replace transmission with updated version if and when transmission fails. How does this relate to my particular Escape?
4. Do I have the new, improved dipstick? I've had 3 different service guys, including at Ford dealerships check it, and one said it's just right, another said it's a little low, and the last guy said he thought it looked a little high. I want to be sure I can read this correctly myself since so many service techs do not seem to be aware of this issue. Please make sure the dealer in Lugoff who will perform the next service has the correct dipstick and can confirm the level is correct for towing.
5. Finally, although I'm trying to maintain a positive outlook and keep the faith in Ford's representations, I'm losing patience and hope for a final fix to this issue. I've heard there is a process and extensive paperwork to begin a "buyback process." Since the only reason I bought this car was based on Ford's representations that it could safely be flat towed, and that does not appear to be the case, I'm interested in starting this process, so please give me information on this. I have no interest in continuing to spend so much time dealing with this and waiting for my car to be fixed when I'm supposed to be on vacation.

Again, while most Ford reps have been courteous and I believe trying to be helpful, that is of little solace to me when I am being inconvenienced to this extent and having to spend this much time and energy on this issue.

Please let me hear the answers to my questions above and hopefully by then, the service by the Ford dealer in Lugoff will be in the works.

Thank you,
Malia Lane

May 11, 2011: (Alji)

Dear Malia,

My name is Alji and I had the opportunity to read your e-mail. I apologize for the disappointment you might have had as a result of your vehicle transmission concern.

Malia, as much as I would like to answer your question about the transmission repair on your vehicle, I am unable to provide a technical response, due to the fact that there are no technical departments at the center that will be able to handle such inquiries. I believe your inquiry is best addressed by contacting a factory trained technicians at Lugoff Ford. Inquiries of a technical nature are best referred to our dealerships because they have factory trained technicians and comprehensive service information that can address your concern. Moreover, please note that your 2009 Ford Escape XLT original transmission is 6 Speed Automatic 6F Mid-Range.

In reference to your inquiry about buyback process, please note that we regret that we are unable to comply with your request. At this time, we strongly recommend that you continue to work with your Dealer as they are the most familiar with your vehicle's concern. While we understand that this may cause some inconvenience, this is the only way that would ensure us your issue will be handled in the most appropriate manner.

Furthermore, your case is being handled by one of our Customer Service Manager and a follow-up is set on 5/13/2011. Once again, we request your patience for the follow up time to occur. By doing so, we can investigate your case further and provide you with the most appropriate response. Ford's number one goal is to resolve your concern.

On behalf of Ford Motor Company as a whole, we are sorry that our response could not be more favorable to you. We hope that we might have the opportunity in the future to restore your confidence in our products and service.

Sincerely,
Alji
Customer Relationship Center
Ford Motor Company

My comments: So I'm giving up on this route...it's obvious this department is more robotic than human. You can't even keep up a continuous conversation with the same representative!

2009 Ford Escape Towing Problems
Recap of Communications with Cathy at Ford Customer Care Department
(for Lugoff Ford region)

Cathy is the Customer Specialist Manager for the region where Lugoff Ford is located.

Friday, May 6:

Voice Mail from Cathy - 866-631-3788 ext. 7741 (My case # 794221071)
(Mary Brewer is actual name - Cathy is middle name - nickname)

"Parts are on order and we have worked with dealership and escalated to emergency status. We will follow up with you by no later than Tuesday, May 10."

My comment: Dealer told me order was placed on emergency basis on April 29 during original visit. Was this really not done then?

Tuesday, May 10:

No call received as promised above, but I spoke to Stacy at Lugoff Ford. She said she had two of the parts, but not the axle.

Friday, May 13:

Spoke to Cathy: she's been calling all over the country to get parts. Besides dealer, she has also escalated to emergency status and is "working with people higher up than her"... Hopefully on Monday she'll have some news but doesn't know if part will actually be in Lugoff by then.

I told her that if I don't leave here on May 18 as planned, the rates at the RV park where I am will start being charged at the daily rate of \$30, significantly higher than the monthly rate I've been at (\$420/month). She said "Ford can assist with this." This is still no real consolation because I have reservations at my next destination, deadlines to meet in regards to articles I'm writing, etc.

Once I understood she worked just in the region of Lugoff Ford, I also told her I wanted to deal with someone on the corporate level who could help me no matter where I am since I am a fulltime RVer and am not in the same area all the time. She said I would still be able to call her and she could put me in touch with whoever I need to work with wherever I am. But it would still be my preference not to be "shuffled around" to different representatives, having to get that new person up to speed with the history. I want one person on a corporate level with the authority to provide the help I need without having to spend all this time constantly going back and forth between people.

Email:

Hi Cathy,

It was nice to speak to you today and I can tell you want to be helpful and I really do appreciate that.

However, as you can also tell, I'm losing patience and hope that this can all be resolved in time for my planned departure on May 18th. But besides being able to leave on time, I'm worried about being able to keep on schedule once I leave Lugoff. If I have to keep dealing with this issue time and again every few hundred miles, it will completely ruin my summer plans.

But for now, I'll send you the questions I have that I mentioned to you that I would like to have answered about my particular situation. I've attached my questions, and link to my blog that has most of my other documentation is here: <http://www.maliasmiles.com/blog/2009-ford-escape-dinghy/>

As I also mentioned, I would also like the opportunity to interview an engineer or knowledgeable representative from Ford that can address the recurring problems with the transmissions in these Ford Escapes. I'm beginning to understand it's not just a problem related to people who flat tow the car, but transmissions are also failing on cars that have never been towed.

However, my main interest and focus is on the RV market. I would like to be able to provide information on this issue to my readers and to other RVers in general. You say this is an important market for Ford, but in all the research I've done, I've not seen one official statement from Ford that really addresses this known issue or that gives us any hope that it can and will be resolved.

Best regards (and trying to still keep the faith in Ford)...

Malia Lane

Monday, May 16:

LM for Cathy: Since part is still not at Lugoff, is it safe to tow to Greenville and get repairs done there? Is it safe to be driven in general (when same fix needed to be done in Baton Rouge, I was told it wasn't safe to drive before repairs are done.)

2009 Ford Escape Towing Problems

Communications and experience with Lugoff Ford

803-438-6124 (ext. 1)
Stacy Wright (Parts & Service Director)
Paul Stewart (Service Rep)
Bob (Service tech)

Background:

April 29, 2011:

While driving car at 45-50 mph, I heard grinding noise and steering wheel started shimmying. I took it to the nearby Lugoff, SC Ford dealer where Paul Stewart, the service rep, kindly fit me into the schedule. Bob (service tech) drove around with me and of course the noise did not recreate. He confirmed transmission fluid level was correct. But he said to be on the safe side, he wanted to put it up on the rack to see what he could see from underneath.

When he returned, he showed me a couple of pages he copied (page 40 and 41 from Ford about front and rear towing connections on the Escape and Mariner). Based on this, he and Paul told me this car was not recommended by Ford to be flat towed. This did not exactly engender confidence in me about their experience with this issue and I told them I knew this was true for older models, but that the 2009 Escape could be flat towed according to the Owner's Manual that I showed to him, along with the 2010 supplemental booklet.

They then acknowledged that it looked like I had done everything correctly according to the manual and supplement, but Bob said that he could see "early signs of transmission failure." He said the left axle is loose where the axle goes into the transmission and that failure may be prevented by replacing left transmission axle bushing and seal.

This sounded familiar to me, so I had him check the car's service record to see this was exactly what was done in February in Baton Rouge per the recall. He agrees this is cause for concern that it would fail again in a little over a year. He also wants to pull the fluid plug to make sure no metal is in the transmission fluid because this could not be seen just by checking fluid level on the dipstick.

The parts are on national back order, and they cannot say how long it will take to get them, but they will order on expedited "emergency" basis.

Friday, May 6:

Voice mail from Stacy: *"I spoke to Ford customer service. In transit date for part is latter part of week of May 9."*

(I had received voice mail from Cathy at Ford Customer Care Department on same day saying "Parts are on order and we have worked with dealership and escalated to emergency status. We will follow up with you by no later than Tuesday, May 10.")

My comment: Dealer told me order was placed on emergency basis on April 29 during original visit. Was this not really done that day?

Wednesday, May 11:

I spoke to Stacy and she said two of the parts are in, but still waiting on axle. She said she had been in contact with Cathy at Ford Customer Care. I told her I had not heard from her yesterday as promised in her voice mail of May 6. She said she would follow up with Cathy. Stacy called me back later to say she still didn't know anything.

I sent email to Stacy with copy of emails sent/received from Leif Johnson Ford (my selling dealer). She said she would make sure I'd get the new dipstick, even if it had to be shipped to dealer in Greenville after I left Lugoff on the 18th as planned. She said if axle is here by Monday, it would only take 5 hours to fix, so I should still be able to make my departure date.

Friday, May 16:

Spoke to Stacy - she has reviewed and printed out the questions I have submitted and forwarded to Cathy (Customer Care Department rep for region).

The part did not arrive in morning shipment, but another shipment comes in after lunch.

The new dipstick will be here tomorrow.

When I expressed concern about Bob not knowing my car could be flat towed, she said he is no longer employed there. He "had not been there long and it wasn't working out." Her shop foreman is senior master certified from Ford and would be doing the repairs.

I asked about the safety of going ahead and towing the car to Greenville to get the repairs done there and also about the general safety about driving the car. When the same repairs were necessary in Baton Rouge in February 2010 (see timeline), I was told the car was not safe to drive and they arranged for a rental car for the time it took to get the parts and fix the problem. She did not agree, but would check on it.

**Communications with Leif Johnson Ford - Austin, TX
(Dealer where I bought car)**

May 10, 2011

To General Manager, Service Director and Service Rep at Leif Johnson Ford

Dear Fred, Kevin, and Pat,

Forgive my email to all three of you, but although I am away from Austin, Pat is aware of some of the problems I had with the battery dying while I was on my way to South Carolina. I am hopeful this issue is resolved, but now I'm having bigger problems.

Not long after I arrived in South Carolina (having towed the car from Austin – 1,100 miles) while I was driving the car, I heard a grinding noise and the wheel started shimmying. I immediately took it to a nearby dealer in Lugoff, SC. That was on April 29 and the service rep said the problem was that the transmission is showing early signs of failure. That's cause for concern enough, but the same repair that he said needs to be done now was exactly what was done the first time I towed the car in February, 2010.

Because the parts are on national backorder, I'm still in Lugoff, SC really worried about continuing to tow this car.

I have started compiling all information on this starting on my website at <http://www.maliasmiles.com/RVTravel/ford-escape.htm> . That has links to my more detailed blog post as well as all communications I've had with Ford about this matter.

I have been happy with all my dealings with Leif Johnson, but I think it's important that you know of these issues. I was adamant with the salesman that the only reason I was buying the 2009 Escape was because of Ford's representations that it could be safely and easily flat towed. From my research, this does not seem to be the case and I am especially concerned that not all dealers seem to be aware of these problems, don't know which models and years are supposed to be able to be flat towed, haven't heard about the May 2010 supplemental bulletin about proper fill levels for the transmission fluid, etc.

I hope that by reviewing the material I've linked that if you have any helpful information, you will let me know what else can be done about this matter.

With thanks,
Malia Lane

May 11, 2011: (from Kevin Hopper, Service Director at Leif Johnson Ford)

Malia,

On April 22nd 2009 we had to replace the trans assembly due to a leak at the right hand axle shaft seal.

There was a bushing that went bad and required replacement of that and the axle shaft and seal, at that time parts were not available so Ford had us replace unit.

Yes you have a 6F35 transmission

What repair is the ford dealer performing where you are at currently, they should be able to make sure it has all the latest parts in it or replace with the latest model

There was an issue at first about fluid level causing your concern and a redesigned dipstick was issued to lower fluid level

I will assist in any way I can, have you spoke to that dealer about a possible buy back?

Kevin

Kevin,

Thanks so much for the info and background you provided. I've sent it on to Stacy, the Lugoff, SC Ford dealer's Parts & Service Director. I can tell she's trying to be helpful, and I mentioned the buyback option and that I wanted to get more information on that. However, this morning I received an email from Ford "Customer Relationship Center" and regarding that issue, he said *"In reference to your inquiry about buyback process, please note that we regret that we are unable to comply with your request. At this time, we strongly recommend that you continue to work with your Dealer as they are the most familiar with your vehicle's concern."*

I'm not so impressed with that and his expression and hope is kinda lost on me at this point, *"On behalf of Ford Motor Company as a whole, we are sorry that our response could not be more favorable to you. We hope that we might have the opportunity in the future to restore your confidence in our products and service."*

Sorry, but although I've found most Ford dealers and representatives to be extremely kind and trying to be helpful, my faith in the Ford product itself is pretty much shot - at least until I get on the road again and it is proven to me that this latest fix really does the trick for the long haul. Even the buyback is not the most attractive offer to me right now. I included the thousands of dollars it took to get the car set up for towing in the financing and I'd hate to start over from zero at this point. All I want is the reliable car that can be flat towed that Ford told me I was getting.

At this point, the dealer here is still waiting on an axle part, but they're still saying if the part arrives by Monday I should be good to go on Wednesday as planned. I'm still not sure if I have the newer dipstick that makes the reading of the level easier, but Stacy is going to check on that for me.

I guess there's nothing else for Leif Johnson to do at this point, Kevin, and I do appreciate your response and concern. If you ever have any other suggestions, I'd love to hear from you. My plans are to be back in Austin in November. I'd love to meet you and Pat at some point and thank you in person for your kind assistance.

Best regards,
Malia Lane

Malia,

I will follow up with you if I hear of anything else that could change the outcome.

Once again if I need to be involved with the N.C. local dealer then just drop me a number and name.

There will be a lady named Susan following up on how pat and I have handled things on our end.

If you need anything else fill free to drop me a line

Sincerely

Kevin Hopper

Thanks a lot, Kevin. The Parts & Service Director at the Lugoff, SC dealer who is going to fix it (hopefully for last time) is making sure I get the new dipstick that will hopefully make it easier to read the transmission fluid level. Although I haven't had that problem since it was fixed in Baton Rouge in February, 2010, I keep hearing that is a big issue, and I've had 3 different people read the level with the present dipstick with 3 different interpretations. I want to do everything I can to make sure I'm following all Ford's recommendations and requirements in order to tow this car safely.

I do appreciate your quick attention to my email, and as I've said before, I've also been extremely impressed with Pat during my phone conversations with her. You've really got a gem of a service rep, there, let me tell you! She even gave me her cell phone number so I could call her after hours if I needed to. Now that is *really* above and beyond any normal service level I've experienced in this entire drama!

Oh, and I haven't mentioned it before, but I also have my RV serviced at Leif Johnson Truck City Ford in Buda. Here's a link to my website about that:
<http://www.maliasmiles.com/texas/austin/rvservices.htm>

So I will be glad to speak to Susan about my experience with Leif Johnson Ford.

Best regards,
Malia

Phone conversation with Pat Malmgren: She said problems I'm having is not just related to towing because she had two customers with same issues who do not tow. Pat has been one of my heroes in this saga, but this news doesn't make me feel any better...

May 13, 2011:

Kevin,

As Service Director of the dealership who sold me the Escape, I'd like to keep you in the loop with this issue since my concern grows about Ford providing a real fix for this recurring problem. I'm still waiting on the part to arrive at the SC local dealer, Lugoff Ford. I'm dealing with the Parts & Service Director, Stacy Wright. Phone: 803-438-6124. I'm copying her on this email as well. Like you, she

has been great and trying to be helpful, but the friendliness of the folks I've dealt with at Ford is not the problem. My faith in this Ford product is totally shaken and my fears about towing this car grows.

I appreciate the answers you've provided to the questions I've asked about the history of the car before I bought it. I'm waiting to hear back from Cathy, Customer Specialist Manager, from Ford's Customer Care Department. I have compiled a list of questions for Ford on that level and will include them below. I'm particularly interested in your take on the 6F35 transmission questions and the certified pre-owned car issue that came up at the time I bought the car and if any of the recourse I'm asking for could come from the seller dealership.

If you have any input or know of anyone else I should be contacting at Ford corporate office about these issues, I'd be interested.

Best regards,
Malia

Questions for Ford

1. History of recurring transmission repairs.

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B. February 19, 2010 (the first time I towed the car 400 miles and had problem), I was told by dealer in Baton Rouge that there was a recall relating to the transmission. His findings and repair: *"Found trans leak at left axle shaft. Replace axle bushing, seal & axle assembly. Refill trans fluid and road test. Drain fluid again and refill per TSB 10-1-5 and road test to verify repair."*

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Question: Since the transmission was totally replaced when the car was practically new due to right axle shaft seal leak, then the left axle shaft seal & assembly was replaced less than a year later, now that same repair is necessary a little over a year later, how can Ford now assure me this car is safe to drive and tow?

2. 6F35 Transmission. I confirmed with the dealer where I bought my Escape that it has that type of transmission. Per [Ford Forums Online](#), there may be pending [class action litigation](#) about these transmissions (not specifically related to towing).

Per [Ford Forums Online](#), "There have been several failures of the 2009-10 6f35 transmission when people flat tow behind their motorhome... In addition to lowered oil levels Ford has now come up with a modified baffle in the transmission which diverts oil differently than the baffle that was originally installed for this purpose. This modified

baffle is installed in production beginning with transmission build date of Feb 8, 2010. There is no preemptive recall to replace this baffle in vehicles that have transmissions built prior to this date but Ford will replace the transmission with the updated version if and when your transmission fails.”

And... “The dealer told me there is a new part that redirects the transmission oil (not specifically called a "baffle"), but that they can only install after failure.

And... “We have been assured (in writing) that transmissions with a build date after February 8, 2010 have a modified baffle assemble that should solve the problem.”

Question: Since my transmission was replaced in April, 2009 (prior to modified baffle issue mentioned above), and subsequent repairs do not mention this baffle, what is status of my transmission related to this baffle?

3. Car Rental for Future Repairs. If I have to continue to deal with this in other stops during my trip, I want Ford to provide me with a comparable rental car at no charge so as to minimize the continuing inconvenience in dealing with these trips to service centers and interruption of my travels.
4. Ford Certified Pre-Owned Program. At the time I tried to negotiate this program for the car. I was told that only a few cars are so designated and it was not up to the dealer which cars qualify from Ford.

Question: I now suspect the car did not qualify because of the known transmission issues that were not disclosed to me when I bought the car. I believe that due to all the time and inconvenience this has caused me that Ford should certify this car and/or provide an extended warranty so that at the very least I am assured that repairs are covered to the fullest extent as a show of good faith on Ford's part.

5. Permanent Fix. From all the issues I've seen on Ford forums and as heard from other RVers, it doesn't sound to me like a real permanent fix has been found. I am not interested in continuing to deal with this every time I tow it. I inquired about getting the paperwork related to the Ford buyback process through the Customer Relations Center and was told via email that “*we regret that we are unable to comply with your request.*”

Question: They won't even send me the paperwork??? I assert that since I bought the car only based on Ford's representation that it could be safely and easily flat towed, that the least they can do is provide me with that kind of car. I've seen some discussion on [forums](#) that the Hybrid has a different transmission and they are not experiencing these types of problems. Is Ford willing to work with me to trade in this car for one of their cars that is proven to be flat towable without so many problems? This would include the cost of having to reinstall the base plate for towing the new car.

Call from Susan Cruz (assistant to owners and General Manager) - 512-706-6246

Follow up to make sure my concerns had been addressed. I reiterated that I had been satisfied with Leif Johnson, but had concerns and questions that came up subsequent to my email to/from Kevin. Forwarded that email above to her.

Dear Susan,

Thanks for your call and kindness! As I said, the email below is what I sent to Kevin today with questions I still need to be addressed. He has been extremely responsive, but the questions below occurred to me following my last communications with him.

The link to my blog with detailed information and documentation is
<http://www.maliasmiles.com/blog/2009-ford-escape-dinghy/>

I hope to hear from you or from someone who can actually help me soon.

Many thanks,
Malia Lane

2009 Ford Escape Towing Problems
Communications with Ford via Twitter (@FordCustService)

May 4, 2011

Sent via Twitter. I'm having problems flat towing 2009 Ford Escape. I sent email via website & outlined experience at <http://tinyurl.com/3gkmh2a>. Please help!

May 4: MK

MK: Hi Malia-I read ur blog. Sounds like everything is w/in our established processes. I assure u there's no runaround, we legitimately have parts on backorder due to any number of reasons. R u reaching out to try to get the parts sooner or for an engineer to review ur situation and provide assurance that you'll be able to safely tow your Escape? ^MK

Me: Thanks so much! Want both please. Want it fixed b4 May 18 and b sure is really safe to tow. Worried and want real answers from 1 who knows. Pls see link to my ltr to Mr. Ford in my response to blog comment. Am desperate but hopeful still.

May 5: MK

MK: Well, placing an emergency order 4 a backordered part is the quickest way to get it. We'll double check timing & reach out to Engineering tomorrow. In the meantime, please DM your VIN, mileage, and contact info so we can open a case. Thanks. ^MK

Me: VIN 1FMCU03739KA13400. Mileage 20,500. (my phone #) (my email address). I understand about ordering emergency basis, but that still doesn't put mind to rest. Letter to Mr. Ford is plea and recap at <http://tinyurl.com/3q2yn7s>. As paralegal, I know important to develop timeline and outline facts. I'm trying not to worry so much, but this is important summer to me and car troubles very scary. TU!

May 5: JL

JL: I'm in the process of fwding ur info 2 the appropriate personnel who will b able 2 better assist. Upon doing so, I'll provide an update. ^JL

Me: JL, thanks, but I assume you saw that MK is also responding? Not sure who's doing what but I appreciate the help!

JL: Yes, MK is going to have Engineering look into your concern further to assure you that everything's safe. Thanks for the heads up :-) ^JL

Me: Great - just didn't want to cause unnecessary double work for anyone. But I really do want that assurance that all is safe! I'm especially concerned that the repair I'm told is needed again now is SAME thing done last year - and AFTER transmission totally replaced in 2009???

JL: I can certainly understand where you are coming from. We hope that we can provide closure to your concern. Let me assure you that the safety of our customers is very important to us. I have passed along your concern to a Customer Care Specialist, who will be contacting you sometime today. They will be able to better assist in terms of providing you with an ETA on your parts. Thank you for your time. ^JL

Me: (at midnight): I guess "sometime today" now means tomorrow so sure would appreciate it if I could be assured all can be taken care of by may 18 when I am scheduled to leave for MI assignment. I have much biz to do with \$ on the line. I NEED my car to work w/out having to spend all this time and trouble constantly dealing with all this hassle. If u could understand how incredibly important this summer is to me u would have pity and really try to help. Not trying to be a pain and I know some things take time but hopefully Ford can accomplish this by then?

May 6:

JL: We are working closely with our vendor & your dealership to get these parts ASAP. A Customer Care Specialist has left you a voice-mail in regards to your parts inquiry. MK will touch base after speaking with engineers. Thank you and have a great weekend! ^JL

MK: Hi Malia - The engineer will be calling you Wednesday or Thursday. Please let me know if you haven't heard from him by Friday. ^MK

Me: Thanks MK - I got message from Cathy that they are working with dealer and have escalated parts order as emergency. But dealer told me that he did that on the first day I had the problem (4-29). She said she would follow up by no later than May 10 so I still hope this can all be fixed by plan depart date May 18. Still worries me that these parts keep failing and doesn't sound like any permanent fix yet. I would like interview with engineer and real answers that will put my mind to rest and I can share with other RVers having same issues. RV market really wants a flat towable car and we all hope Ford can truly give us one without having ruined trips due to recalls and repairs.

My comments: I did receive a voice mail from Cathy on May 6. (Case # 794221071)

As of May 16, I've never been contacted by an engineer nor had any of my questions answered.

2009 Ford Escape Towing Problems

VIN # 1FMCU03739KA13400

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