



PRESS RELEASE

State of Louisiana
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Atty. Gen. Richard Ieyoub wants Ford to fix fire-prone cars killing law officers

Moratorium recommended on the purchase of any Ford Crown Victoria Police interceptors to protect the officers and citizens of the State of Louisiana

BATON ROUGE –Louisiana Attorney General Richard Ieyoub recommended an immediate moratorium on the purchase of Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor vehicles until Ford assures the state that the vehicles will not burst into flames on rear impact, and backs that assurance with independent testing. By this action, Ieyoub announced stepped up efforts to protect Louisiana Law Enforcement from dangers associated with the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor.

In announcing his intention to put more pressure on Ford Motor Company to answer questions surrounding the safety of the Ford Crown Victoria, Ieyoub explained, "One of my primary concerns is the health and safety of our law enforcement officers. In the past four months, two police officers have burned to death while on duty in their Crown Victorias."

On October 23, 2002, City of Dallas Police Officer Thomas Metzler died when his Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor was rear-ended and erupted in flames. On December 20, 2002, New York State Trooper Robert Ambrose died when his Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor was rear ended as he was conducting an accident investigation. These most recent deaths come nearly five years after the loss of a Louisiana Officer. On May 19, 1998, Louisiana State Trooper Hung Le was killed when his Ford Crown Victoria was rear ended and exploded. Ford Motor Company quietly settled a lawsuit by the family, and the terms are confidential. Thirteen police officers in total have died in fire while on duty in Ford Crown Victorias; other lawsuits by the families have also been settled quietly.

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"What is particularly disturbing," according to General Iyoub, "in virtually each accident in which an officer died, the officer would have otherwise survived the accident, but was burned to death." The Dallas Medical Examiner recently reported that Officer Metzler died of burns and smoke inhalation. According to news reports, witnesses tried to save New York State Trooper Ambrose as he struggled to free himself, but the flames were too intense.

According to dozens of lawsuits filed by police departments around the country, the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor is not safe for the intended purpose – a vehicle to be used by law enforcement – and is unreasonably dangerous. Police departments in Louisiana, Florida, Ohio, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Illinois, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania have filed lawsuits. These lawsuits contend that the placement of the tank dramatically and unnecessarily increases the risk of explosion and fire.

In September 2002, after years of denying any problem with the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor, Ford Motor Company announced a system of partial shields to prevent punctures of the fuel tank. "I am deeply concerned about the fact that the shields announced by Ford, which have not been independently tested, would not have prevented a puncture to Officer Metzler's car," explained Attorney General Iyoub. Ford also announced that trunk packages to prevent equipment from puncturing the tank would now be available for sale but must be bought by the Police Departments.

Iyoub announced that he intended to take the following action: "Immediately, I am asking Ford Motor Company to address our safety concerns and answer truthfully what they have known about these risks. I am also requiring Ford Motor Company to permit and fund independent testing of all proposed safety changes to these vehicles at Ford's expense. While we await the results of the independent testing and obtain the necessary answers from Ford, I am recommending to all law enforcement in the State that they implement a moratorium on any future purchase of the Ford Crown Victoria. I will be inviting all law enforcement agencies in the State to meet with me personally in Baton Rouge in the coming weeks to discuss safety concerns surrounding the Ford Crown Victoria and what can be done to put pressure on Ford to fix this problem. Finally, if Ford does not address these concerns to my satisfaction, I will consider initiating a lawsuit intended to protect our law enforcement officers."

Attorney General Iyoub said, "Our law enforcement officers place themselves in harms way every minute of every day for us. They do so with little regard for their own safety and we ask much of these men and women. We owe the law enforcement officers of our State the duty to take every step possible to provide them the safest environment to work and protect our citizens. Today, we take the next possible step."



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January 16, 2003

William Clay Ford, Jr.
Chief Executive Officer
Ford Motor Company
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Dearborn, Michigan 48126

Re: Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor Safety Issues

Dear Mr. Ford:

The State of Louisiana is very concerned about the safety issues surrounding the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor ("CVPI"). I have reviewed the March 4, 2002 correspondence directed to your attention from The State of Arizona. In addition, I have had the benefit of reviewing the materials provided by Ford Motor Company in support of its latest attempts to improve the safety margins of the fuel tank. Despite the attention to this issue, two more police officers have been burned to death in Ford Crown Victoria's during explosive car fires after being rear-ended.

Each day, law enforcement officers in the State of Louisiana risk their lives in the line of duty. They do so often times with little regard for their own safety. However, considering the evidence that many, if not all, of the officers who burned to death would have survived the crash but for the fire injuries, I am particularly disturbed that Ford Motor Company has not solved these issues with greater expediency.

The issue of bladders and full protective shields have been the subject of great debate in the public forum. In addition, fire suppression technology is apparently available. These appear, from the public discussion, to potentially improve the safety margin for our officers. While I appreciate the efforts of Ford Motor Company at proposing anything to improve safety margins, I am unclear as to what testing was done by Ford Motor Company of the shields, whether that testing was adequate, whether or not there were any failures during testing, what other testing of companion technology is contemplated, what other potential technology was considered and rejected by Ford, and why other available technology was rejected.

Therefore, I want Ford Motor Company to give me assurances that these proposed fixes will protect our officers and I want Ford Motor Company to back that representation up with independent testing. I want to know why Ford Motor Company believes this proposed fix is superior to alternative technology to offer the best and safest level of

protection available. It is my understanding that while the CVPI involved in the Dallas accident was not equipped with a shield, at least one of the punctures to the fuel tank would not have been prevented by the shield system Ford Motor Company proposes.

I do not wish this dialogue to be conducted by those who only make presentations or who are more accurately described as "company spokespersons." Instead, I am requesting real answers from those engineers and executives of Ford Motor Company with the knowledge to answer our questions.

We will require independent testing of these proposed shields and available technology. Engineers selected by my office with Ford's input will develop protocols for the testing. I believe that where our officers are involved, proposed fixes, which might save lives, must be subjected to the independent analysis of the scientific community. I am, therefore, also requesting that Ford work with my office to institute and fund such independent testing.

If Ford Motor Company is confident the proposed shields are the most effective and reasonable fix, then Ford should be willing to pay for such an independent study. To shift the costs of this testing to the law enforcement community and the political subdivisions which purchase your vehicles, and considering the issue is one of an alleged defect, is in my opinion patently unfair to the citizens of my State.

I am hopeful that we may open this dialogue immediately. It is my intention to make my office and myself available to discuss these issues. However, so we are clear, while I await these answers and the results of independent testing I am recommending to all law enforcement in Louisiana a full moratorium on the purchase of any new Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptors.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Very truly yours,

RICHARD P. IEYOUB
Attorney General