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## Ford Sued in Class Action Claiming Sudden Acceleration

By Margaret Cronin Fisk - Mar 29, 2013

[Ford Motor Co. \(F\)](#) was sued on behalf of customers in 14 states over claims that its vehicles are subject to unintentionally accelerating and lack fail-safe measures to prevent crashes.

The complaint, filed yesterday in federal court in Huntington, West Virginia, claims that Ford's electronic throttle system can take control of the accelerator and leave drivers unable to stop the vehicle. The company added a brake override system in its North American cars in 2010 that it failed to include in older-model cars, according to the complaint.

The plaintiffs seek compensation for the loss of vehicle value, contending owners paid too much for cars from 2002 to 2010 with defects. Ford is accused of knowing of the alleged defect and concealing it from consumers.

"Ford could have and should have prevented the dangers presented by these foreseeable incidents by including" a brake override system or other fail-safe measures in its vehicles, according to the complaint. "Ford affirmatively concealed from plaintiffs and the other class members the defect."

Jay Cooney, a spokesman for Dearborn, Michigan-based Ford, didn't immediately respond to a call for comment on the complaint.

### 14 States

The models named in the complaint include the 2005 through 2010 Ford Mustang, 2002 through 2005 Mercury Cougar and 2004 through 2010 Ford Explorer. The 19 named plaintiffs seek to represent Ford owners in 14 states, including West Virginia, New York, [Illinois](#) and [Florida](#).

"We anticipate that by the time this gets to trial, we will have class representatives from all 50 states," Adam Levitt, an attorney for the plaintiffs, said in a phone interview yesterday. "This is a serious problem that affects consumers across the U.S."

The lawsuit is similar to class, or group, actions brought against [Toyota Motor Corp. \(7203\)](#) alleging that recalls for unintended acceleration issues hurt the value of U.S. customers' vehicles.

Toyota, based in Aichi, [Japan](#), reached a \$1.1 billion settlement with consumers last year on the economic-loss claims.

“The bottom line is that cars have an unintended acceleration problem, and as with Toyota, Ford failed to integrate adequate fail-safe systems in the U.S.,” said Levitt, with Grant & Eisenhofer in [Chicago](#). Some plaintiffs have experienced sudden acceleration events, he said. “But this isn’t a complaint involving personal injuries. It involves economic loss.”

The case is *Belville v. Ford Motor Co.*, 12-cv-06529, U.S. District Court, Southern District of West Virginia (Huntington).

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