

Ford issues urgent Kuga recall

Ford has issued an urgent safety recall after yet another fire threat to its luxury Kuga SUVs, this time near its front seatbelts.



The recall was announced on Tuesday. Hundreds of owners received e-mails urging them to bring their car to a dealer because of fears that insulation near the front seatbelts could catch alight in a collision.

The recall is the third in the past eight months.

Reshall Jimmy was killed when his Kuga caught fire while he was on holiday in the Wilderness, in the Western Cape, in December 2015.

Since his death, 64 other Kugas have caught fire in South Africa, two of them within the last two months. The first two recalls were for faulty coolant systems, which Ford said led to the vehicle's cylinder head cracking, allowing oil to leak onto the hot engine and catch fire.

The latest recall notice states: "In the event of an impact which deploys the front seatbelt retractor's pre-tensioner there is a possibility that the insulation material on the inner face of the lower 'B' pillar trim could be subjected to a concentrated heat source that could ignite the insulation material, resulting in fire.

"Please note that, as the owner of the vehicle, you have possession and control of the vehicle and as such, the onus is on

you to act upon the receipt of this notification," Ford told drivers.

"While this recall is not related, customers that are already bringing their vehicles in for the phase 2 action will be able to have both recalls conducted at the same time," said Ford SA spokesman Alisea Chetty.

Customers not affected by the previous Kuga recall, or those who have already had Phase 2 of the recall completed, should contact their dealer to schedule an appointment, Chetty said.

Kuga owners are furious and are demanding that Ford remove its entire Kuga range from the country's roads and reimburse drivers.

The National Consumer Commission is investigating Ford for the fires.

Durban grandmother Yvonne Nagouran, after receiving the recall e-mail, said she was petrified of her Kuga.

"I am too scared to drive with my eight-month-old grandson inside.

"When I go out in my Kuga I carry a steel stick with me. It's always in my car in case I have to smash open one of the windows in case my car catches fire," she said.

Her car had gone through the two previous recalls.

"Now it's this recall. Surely they can get this vehicle sorted out once and for all. We fear driving our Ford. We simply do not know if it is going to kill us," she said.

The repair work for this recall should not take more than an hour to complete, Ford said.

For more information, contact Ford Customer Service at 0800 204 688 or 012 843 5824 or e-mail CRC3@ford.com

Source: The Times

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