



Ford will recall about 313,000 old cars in the 3-country North American market to fix headlamp failures linked to 11 crashes.

At issue are Ford Crown Victoria and virtually identical Mercury Grand Marquis and Marauder passenger cars from the 2003-'05 model years. The vehicles have lighting control modules with solder joints that crack and kill power to the headlamps, posing a threat to drivers who may be suddenly plunged into darkness while driving at night.

The U.S. NHTSA opened an investigation of over half a million of the cars last August after reviewing more than 3,600 complaints of lighting failures and reports of 15 crashes and one injury. The problem has been known in the auto parts and repair industry for quite some time, and has spawned everything from entertainingly-presented [field fixes](#) to aftermarket [workarounds](#) for the failing modules. The recall covers 296,000 cars in the United States, 15,000 in Canada and 2,000 in Mexico; dealers will replace the lighting control module.

The Crown Victoria and its badge-engineered sister models are large body-on-frame sedans with chassis and mechanical underpinnings dating back to 1979. They were enduringly popular with police departments and taxicab companies throughout North America, and were manufactured in great numbers through 2011 when it was no longer able to meet American safety standards. The cars use very basic lighting systems; the headlamps are simple reflector items with one HB5 halogen bulb providing low and high beam. When the failure occurs, some drivers are reportedly able to turn the lights back on, while some said lights flickered before turning off completely. NHTSA had previously investigated the same lighting issue in 2008 without demanding a recall after finding no reports of crashes linked to the issue at that time.