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Carbon Monoxide Detectors in Ford Explorers

Last July, The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) launched an investigation regarding reported cases of carbon monoxide (CO) inhalation related to the patrol Ford Explorer.

Ford investigated the affected police departments' vehicles and discovered drilled wiring access holes and unsealed spaces where exhaust could enter the cabin compartment of some Ford Explorers. Ford determined that these issues were created in the vehicle during the outfitting of police equipment.

SFPD's vehicle outfitter has equipped all of our Ford Explorers and has followed specifications that do not require drilling or creation of any such access holes in the underside of the vehicles. Thus, to date, we have not had any CO concerns.

However, over the next several months, each of the Ford Explorer vehicles in the SFPD fleet will be inspected by Ford. Ford will check for any leakage issues or potential problems and make any necessary repairs or modifications as needed.

In addition, out of an abundance of caution, Fleet will install active and passive carbon monoxide detectors in each vehicle. The purpose of the active detector is to sound an audible signal if the interior of the vehicle reaches an unsafe level of carbon monoxide. This system will help detect any carbon monoxide that may leak into the vehicle cabin thus alerting members to its presence before levels rise and create an unsafe condition. The passive detector will simply indicate if the vehicle has previously had any unsafe buildup of CO.

At the beginning of each shift, the vehicle operator shall test the active CO monitor to ensure it is in working condition.

This simply involves pressing the test button until the unit audibly sounds its warning alarm, much like a home smoke detector/CO monitor would. Additionally, the operator shall inspect the passive CO monitor to ensure that it has not previously registered dangerously high CO levels. This involves looking at the color chart and verifying that the CO monitor is in the proper range for continued use.

If CO is detected in a patrol vehicle, the station VMO shall be notified and the vehicle shall be immediately removed from service and brought to Ford for service. During normal business hours the VMO shall notify Fleet Operations at [REDACTED]. After hours the VMO shall have the vehicle towed to 1800 Jerrold Street.