

Business

## Nearly 1.3 million Ford F-150 trucks being investigated in U.S. over unexpected gear shift

Transport Canada has started investigation following similar complaints in Canada

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The U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said Monday it is opening a preliminary evaluation into some Ford F-150 pickup trucks from the 2015 to 2017 model years after receiving complaints from 138 consumers. (Rebecca Cook/Reuters)

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is investigating nearly 1.3 million Ford F-150 pickup trucks in the United States over reports of an unexpected gear downshift accompanied by a temporary rear-wheel lock-up.

The NHTSA said Monday it is opening a preliminary evaluation into some Ford F-150 pickup trucks from the 2015 to 2017 model years after receiving complaints from 138 consumers.

Complaints alleged unexpected transmission downshifts to lower gears while travelling at highway speeds without warning or driver input, followed by the vehicle rapidly decelerating.

A Ford spokesperson said Monday the automaker is "working with NHTSA to support its investigation" and said it is related to vehicles with six-speed transmissions.



"Transport Canada has received two complaints alleging a downshift issue with 2015-2017 F-150 vehicles equipped with the 6R80 six-speed transmission and 11 complaints alleging a similar issue with 2017-2020 F-150 vehicles equipped with the 10R80 ten-speed transmission," Transport Canada told CBC News. (Rebecca Cook/Reuters)

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Ford did not provide any comment on CBC News's request about the impact to consumers in Canada.

Transport Canada says it is monitoring the NHTSA investigation.

"Transport Canada has received two complaints alleging a downshift issue with 2015-2017 F-150 vehicles equipped with the 6R80 six-speed transmission and 11 complaints alleging a similar issue with 2017-2020 F-150 vehicles equipped with the 10R80 10-speed transmission," Transport Canada told CBC News on Wednesday.

"As a result, Transport Canada has started an investigation to evaluate these complaints and is currently reviewing them."

To date, Ford Canada has not advised Transport Canada of a safety defect related to the six-speed transmission on 2015-2017 Ford F-150 pickup trucks, it said.

The NHTSA is opening a preliminary evaluation into the issue and then must decide whether to update the probe to an engineering analysis before it could seek to require a recall.



Complaints alleged unexpected transmission downshifts to lower gears while travelling at highway speeds without warning or driver input, followed by the vehicle rapidly decelerating. (Eric Cox/Reuters)

A 2023 complaint from an owner in Ohio of a 2016 F-150 said that while driving on the highway at 113 km/h, "the truck automatically shifted from sixth gear to first gear nearly throwing me through the windshield."

Many owners reported long waits to get replacement parts.

Some complaints said the vehicle's rear wheels would lock temporarily, seize or skid during the downshift, leading to loss of control. This could lead to an increased risk of a crash, the NHTSA said. The agency said no crashes or fires had been reported.

## Latest in a series of investigations

This is the latest in a series of NHTSA investigations into F-150 unexpected downshifting.

In June, Ford recalled 668,000 2014 model year F-150 trucks over reports of unexpected downshifts into the first gear causing a loss of driver control or rear-wheel lock-up.





NHTSA is opening a preliminary evaluation into the issue and then must decide whether to update the probe to an engineering analysis before it could seek to require a recall. (Rebecca Cook/Reuters)

It was the latest Ford recall over the issue since 2016 and came after the NHTSA in March 2023 opened an investigation into whether 2014 model trucks needed to be recalled for the issue.

Ford in 2016 recalled 153,000 2011-2012 Ford F-150 vehicles equipped with six-speed automatic transmissions to address the downshift issue.

- [Something wrong with your car? Here's how Canada's vehicle recall system works](#)
- [Ford to produce F-Series pickups at Oakville plant from 2026](#)

The NHTSA opened a probe into the issue in December 2017 and in 2019 Ford expanded its recall to cover 1.48 million F-150 trucks in North America, including 2013 models. Ford later recalled 107,000 2013 F-150 vehicles due to an issue with the fix.

In November, Ford agreed to a \$165-million US civil penalty after the NHTSA found the automaker failed to recall vehicles with defective rearview cameras in a timely manner.

*With files from CBC's Samritha Arunasalam*

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