

# Ford customers to do daily and monthly checks

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The tightness of wheel nuts and the operation of air conditioning systems, lights and indicators are just some of the checks and balances Ford requires its Kuga owners to do to ensure their vehicles do not catch alight.



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In a document titled: "Announcing Ford Kuga EcoBoost Maintenance Check Program", issued to owners and drivers of the 1.6l Kuga models under threat of self combustion, Ford tells its customers that it is investigating reports of engine fires in Kugas equipped with the 1.6l engines in South Africa.

To date 51 of the 1.6l Kugas manufactured between 2012 and 2014 at Ford's factory in Valentia, Spain, and sold in South Africa, have caught alight in this country.

## Letter to Kuga customers

The global car manufacturer, in a letter to its Kuga customers, which TimesLIVE has a copy of, states that while the company's investigations into the incidents are not complete, they have found that the fires may be caused by the engines overheating.

"To help reduce the risk of engine overheating, we are advising affected customers to contact their Ford dealer to request

further check of the maintenance items, especially to check coolant system conditions and integrity."

The letter, which is authored and signed by Ford SA's Director of service engineering operations, Pieter Verster, adds: "Ford Motor Company would like to remind customers of the need to check their vehicle coolant and oil levels between regular service intervals to ensure correct operation of the vehicle".

"These maintenance requirements are laid out in the Owner's Manual and listed below for your convenience."

## **Owner checks**

The letter then, under the heading: 'Owner checks', says that it is important for the vehicle's owner to perform regular checks.

It lists, for daily checks, that owners and drivers check their vehicles exterior lamps, interior lamps, warning lamps and indicators, while, when refuelling, the oil and coolant levels are checked, along with the washer fuel levels and tyre pressure and conditions.

The monthly checks contained in the letter, call for coolant and oil levels to be checked, along with brake fluid levels; pipes, hoses and reservoirs to be checked for leaks; the air conditioning, parking brake and horn [hooter] operation and the tightness of lug nuts [wheel nuts].

It also calls for special attention to be paid to warning lights and messages which show in the instrument cluster, and that if these indicate the owner should immediately contact their car to their nearest Ford dealership.

## **Puzzled customers**

Durban Kuga owner, Janet Watson, who received the letter when she took her Kuga in last week to the Umhlanga dealership, said she was left puzzled by the letter's contents.

"I don't even know what lug nuts are? What does the air condition system have to do with the fires which have been occurring?" she asked.

She said when she enquired why she had to do all these other checks, the dealership told her this was the letter that Ford SA had instructed its dealerships to give to all Kuga owners once the safety recall had been done on their vehicle.

"It feels like they are trying to pass responsibility onto us the owners. They don't explain how the tightness, or not, of wheel nuts or the non-operation of the air conditioner contribute to the fires."

The spate of fires in South Africa saw Ford, under pressure from the National Consumer Commission, announce a safety recall of the 1.6l Kuga last month.

Ford maintains that the fires are caused by a faulty coolant system, which the company replaces with a more robust system.

*Source: The Times*