



BREAKING NEWS:

OVERVIEW: REDESIGNED 2005 FORD ESCAPE SPRINTS AHEAD WITH NEW POWERTRAIN, STYLE AND SAFETY

- A fresh look inside and out
- All-new Duratec 23 four-cylinder engine with newly available automatic transmission
- New fully automatic Intelligent 4WD System
- Standard Personal Safety System™ and optional Safety Canopy™ rollover protection

MIAMI, Nov. 7, 2003 – The great Escape just got greater. Available early next year, the redesigned 2005 Ford Escape expands its capability and style with a new four-cylinder engine, Intelligent 4WD System, a fresh look inside and out, standard anti-lock brakes and the Safety Canopy curtain air bag system with rollover protection.

“Escape combines fuel economy, durability, roominess and capability on- and off-road in a small SUV,” says Steve Lyons, Ford Division president. “It remains the segment leader by continuing to deliver the right package at the right price.”

Key changes for 2005 include:

- The new Duratec 23 2.3L I-4 engine with a newly available automatic transmission
- An all-new automatic Intelligent 4WD System
- Quieter cabin with standard floor shifter and substantially upgraded interior
- A fresh appearance with new lamps, front and rear fascias, wheels and four new colors
- The Safety Canopy™, Personal Safety System™ and improved offset crash protection

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Escape: A Popular Segment Leader

Escape offers the advantages of two engine options, including a powerful V-6, 10 common equipment configurations in XLS, XLT and Limited trims, independent rear suspension, a rear liftgate with flip-up glass, outstanding roominess, cargo features and spaciousness. It is also the only small SUV designed to pass the rigorous Tough Truck testing given to all Ford trucks and SUVs.

As a leader in the small sport-utility segment, Escape attracts younger buyers to the Ford SUV lineup. The target customers are active singles and couples in their 20s and 30s, as well as those who are “young at heart.” Escape is fun -to-drive, agile, sporty, durable yet affordable and fuel-efficient transportation ideal for first-time SUV buyers or those seeking the attributes of an SUV in a more compact package.

Escape sales through September, 2003 were up 17 percent, with more than 123,000 sales already this year – more than any of its competitors. Last year, Ford sold more than 145,000 Escapes.

For the 2005 model year, Escape is designed for even greater appeal, with a new four-cylinder engine and newly available automatic transmission that gives Escape the best range of powertrains in the segment.

New Duratec 23 Four-Cylinder Engine

With its new Duratec 23 four-cylinder engine, Escape is the latest Ford Motor Company vehicle to take advantage of the company’s new global four-cylinder engine family. The engine develops 153 horsepower and 152 foot-pounds of torque, while a balance shaft provides exceptional smoothness. An automatic transmission is newly available for 2005 and is expected to make the four-cylinder Escape more popular. The standard manual transmission is a new gearbox with lighter shifting efforts and shorter throws.

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Improved Duratec 30 V-6 Engine

The Duratec 30 V-6 engine, standard on Escape XLT and Limited, is improved for 2005 with a smoother idle and more responsive part-throttle response thanks to new engine mounts and the sophisticated Black Oak powertrain management computer. With 200 peak horsepower, it is one of the most powerful engines in the segment.

Hybrid Power Coming Soon

The 2005 Escape and the new Duratec 23 architecture form the foundation for the Escape Hybrid, which will go on sale in late summer 2004. The hybrid-electric version of the Escape will use a modified version of the Duratec 23 and a hybrid transaxle to deliver very low emissions and high fuel economy with the performance of a V-6 engine and the go-anywhere capability Escape customers expect from a Ford SUV.

All-New Intelligent 4WD System

The 2005 Escape has the new fully-automatic Intelligent 4WD System for even better traction and stability with smoother, more fuel-efficient operation. The computer-controlled system operates so transparently that most drivers will never notice it has engaged – except by being impressed with Escape’s capability in slippery conditions. Escape also is available in a front-wheel-drive configuration that provides more traction and stability than rear-wheel-drive competitors.

Standard Floor Shifter and a Fresh Look Inside and Out

For 2005 Escape has a substantially re-fitted interior with a standard flow-through console and floor-mounted shifter, modern gauges, upgraded seat cushions and fabrics and more storage spaces. Escape’s aggressive exterior is updated for 2005 with new headlamps, fog lamps, an egg-crate grille, new front and rear fascias and new 15-inch and 16-inch aluminum wheels. The lower bumpers, front and rear, have stylized ribs. Four new paint colors include Sonic Blue, Norse Blue, Silver Metallic and Titanium Green.

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Class-Leading Safety and Security

With revisions to the body structure to improve performance in offset frontal crashes, a standard passenger-seat weight-sensing technology and the Personal Safety System™, the Escape is expected to be the first vehicle in its class to meet the newly amended Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 208 for occupant crash protection. The Ford-exclusive Safety Canopy™ rollover protection system is also available in 2005. Head restraints and three-point safety belts are standard at all seating positions.

Quieter Interior, More Comfortable Ride

The 2005 Escape benefits from major engineering efforts to quiet the interior. Added sound-absorbing panels and tighter sealing measures reduce cabin noise, while the balance shaft on the new Duratec 23 and new engine mounts on the Duratec 30 make the powertrains smoother than ever. Larger-diameter front shocks and a new front stabilizer system better absorb road impacts while maintaining Escape's hallmark driving dynamics.

More Confident Braking

Anti-lock brakes are newly standard on all models for 2005. The system features Quick Brake Assist, a power-assistance technology that can recognize hard braking and help the driver apply maximum braking force – for shorter stops. Six-cylinder four-wheel-drive models now have discs at all four wheels.

The 2005 Escape will begin production in December 2003 at Ford's Kansas City, Mo. assembly plant and in Jan. 2004 at the Avon Lake, Ohio assembly plant. Major markets include North America and Europe, where it is sold under the Maverick nameplate.

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