

2009 Escape Steering and Suspension

2009 FORD ESCAPE, MERCURY MARINER MORE FUN TO DRIVE

The Ford Escape and Mercury Mariner are more engaging to drive than ever.

For 2009, the compact SUVs combine improved performance and responsiveness with fuel-economy savings. Improvements include powertrain upgrades, new low-rolling-resistance tires and aerodynamics refinements – all of which contribute to a more dynamic, fun-to-drive experience.

New engine technology is at the heart of the fuel economy and performance enhancements for the 2009 Escape and Mariner. Retuned suspensions and steering along with a new set of tires provide a harmonious balance between performance and handling.

The new 2.5-liter I-4 engine boasts a 1.7-second improvement in 0-60-mph acceleration. An optional, 3.0-liter V-6 engine is offered with a 40-hp increase to 240 hp. The additional power helps Escape and Mariner V-6 models cut 1.7 seconds from their 0-60 mph acceleration times.

Both engines are expected to achieve an estimated 1 mpg improvement versus the outgoing models.

On hybrid models, the new I-4 engine also has been adapted to the Atkinson Cycle. Advancements in engine processor technology enable a nearly imperceptible transition from gas to electric mode.

On the road, suspension and other chassis changes allow these small SUVs to offer a driving dynamic performance that feels more like a car than a truck.

For example, the steering system of the Escape and Mariner has been retuned for better control and tighter cornering capability. Also improving handling are a new 18.5 mm rear stabilizer bar and revised suspension tuning.

“When it comes to steering, it’s about finding the proper balance between tire performance and steering dynamics,” says Ron Razzano, Escape/Mariner vehicle engineering manager. “With Escape and Mariner, we found that balance, giving optimal car-like drivability and increased responsiveness.”

Braking improvements focused on increasing initial braking response and further fine-tuning the vehicle’s anti-lock braking system (ABS).

Driving comfort was another focal point with redesigned eco-friendly front seats to substantially increase driver and passenger comfort and improve overall driving experience. The Escape-Mariner engineering team also strove to reduce noise intrusion with features such as a new underhood air induction system for V-6 models.

On hybrid models, a new brake system also provides a more seamless transition from electric regenerative braking to traditional braking, with a new pedal sensor for better driver feedback. A new damper system has been developed to reduce feedback and vibrations.

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