

2017 ESCAPE DEBUTS NEW SYNC 3 WITH APPLE CARPLAY, ANDROID AUTO; NEW QUALITY CHECKS IMPROVE FORD'S BEST-SELLING SUV

Production of the new 2017 Ford Escape - available with driver-assist technology that can help keep drivers in their lane, maintain a set speed and distance on the highway, and even aid drivers in getting out of a tight parking spot - is now underway; sales begin in May

- New Escape - first Ford vehicle to offer Apple CarPlay and Android Auto - aims to maintain sales momentum and attributes that led it to a tie* as Highest-Ranked Compact SUV by J.D. Power in Initial Quality; Escape is the No. 2-selling Ford vehicle in the United States, second only to F-Series
- To deliver top quality, the build process at Louisville Assembly Plant has implemented multiple new attention-to-detail stations that use high-tech methods and human touch to scrutinize every Escape that comes down the line

LOUISVILLE, Ky., - Production of the new 2017 Ford Escape - available with driver-assist technology that can help keep drivers in their lane, maintain a set speed and distance on the highway, and even aid drivers in getting out of a tight parking spot - is now underway.

The new Escape, which goes on sale in May, will be the first Ford vehicle available with all-new SYNC® Connect technology, making the ownership experience easier through vehicle features such as remote start and door locking via the new FordPass® platform. Escape will also be first to offer SYNC 3 featuring Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

And thanks to multiple new attention-to-detail stations at Louisville Assembly Plant, Ford is putting more emphasis than ever on delivering the highest-quality Escape to its customers.

Workers at Louisville Assembly have been manufacturing Escape since 2012. Since then, production has steadily increased to meet growing demand for the No. 1-selling Ford Motor Company SUV. In 2015, Louisville Assembly built 306,492 units - a record for the nameplate - all while maintaining a high standard of quality that put 2015 Escape in a tie* as Highest-Ranked Compact SUV by J.D. Power in Initial Quality.

"We're constantly evolving and improving our processes, and the J.D. Power award is our reward," said David Farley, Louisville Assembly Plant quality manager. "It's a real tribute to the thousands of workers who help create every Escape vehicle."

Louisville Assembly is a sprawling 3.7-million-square-foot plant that houses 4,722 hourly employees, 247 salaried workers and 20.1 miles of assembly conveyor. It is one of Ford's highest-volume production facilities in the world, capable of manufacturing up to six different vehicles at any time. Yet with Ford's compact SUV in such great demand, most vehicles built at Louisville wear an Escape badge.

Quality assurances are implemented throughout the plant to ensure craftsmanship is maintained at the pressing pace with which the line moves. A combination of state-of-the-art technology methods and thorough human scrutiny is evident from one station to the next.

At each of these stations - in just 45 seconds - vehicle quality is verified to ensure that every Escape meets the high standard for quality compact SUV drivers in North America expect.

- Automated instrument panel decking: The use of robots to install instrument panels has now migrated to the company's plants globally, but Louisville was Ford's first North American facility to use robots for the task. Here, from a nearby conveyor, a robot attaches to an Escape instrument panel, then rotates toward the shell of a vehicle. Angling the instrument panel through a door-less opening, the robot nestles it in place with unwavering accuracy and assured repeatability, says Escape chief engineer Milton Wong. The robot even secures a few bolts to hold the panel in place until humans can complete more detailed aspects of the process further down the line. Customer benefits include a tighter fit for the instrument panel, resulting in fewer squeaks and rattles.
- Robotic arms hang doors, liftgate: Highly efficient robotic arms lift door panels and liftgates from a nearby conveyor hanger and swing them into place with computer-guided consistency. These revolutionary robots were added when Escape production moved to Louisville for the 2013 model year. Customer benefits include tighter fit with body panels.
- Easy speed testing: To ensure that closing a door on Escape is consistently effortless, a worker applies suction cup-backed sensors to either side of a door opening, then closes the door by hand to get a velocity reading, which calculates the amount of effort required. Once it's verified the amount of effort does not exceed the Ford standard, the tools are quickly moved to the next door for another test. Customer benefit is that minimum effort is required to close doors.
- Vehicle on wheels cell: As each Escape moves along the line, it passes through the vehicle on wheels cell, where robots wielding lasers scan every gap between door panels, hood and liftgate. Through laser measurement, they

quickly determine all gaps are within the 2 millimeter to 4 millimeter range.

Customer benefits include tighter fit and finish of body panels.

- Customer assurance line: A 14-person inspection team combs over the finest details on each new Escape. A technician tests electrical modules, while another checks the engine. Some rely on their hands; others, their eyes. It's a meticulous process, as team members work with frenzied precision like a pit crew attending to a race car. Customer benefit is improved overall vehicle quality.

Three shifts of line workers are tasked with keeping pace at Louisville Assembly Plant - 20 hours per day on weekdays, 10 hours on the weekend. Through the first two months of 2016, Escape is on track to eclipse last year's record sales, and available new features and Ford's commitment to high quality should only broaden the vehicle's appeal.

Other new features available include enhanced active park assist. Two EcoBoost® engines are newly available - a 1.5-liter and a 2.0-liter twin-scroll, both with Auto Start/Stop functionality.

**The Ford Escape received the lowest number of problems per 100 vehicles among Compact SUVs in a tie in the proprietary J.D. Power 2015 Initial Quality Study. Study based on responses from 84,367 new-vehicle owners, measuring 244 models, and measures opinions after 90 days of ownership. Proprietary Study results are based on experiences and perceptions of owners who surveyed in February-May 2015. Your experiences may vary. Visit jdpower.com.*

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