

## 2009 LINCOLN MKS AWD



The all-new MKS has become the flagship of Lincoln, the luxury division of Ford. It is based on the Volvo platform Ford uses for the Taurus, Flex and Lincoln MKS, among others. The MKS is a front-wheel drive that can be equipped with optional all-wheel drive. It is powered by a 3.7-litre V6 and will be the first Ford product to receive the new EcoBoost twin-turbo engine.

### **Interior and trunk**

The front seats are easy to access and very, very comfortable, with good side bolsters to hold occupants snugly in place. The driving position is good but would be better if the wheel well didn't take up so much left leg space. On the passenger side, it's right leg room that suffers. The doors finish below the sills and keep them clean.

Getting out of the backseat is more difficult than getting in because of limited space between the B-pillar and seat cushion. The bench-type seat is comfortable for two adults, who'll appreciate the high seating position. Headroom and legroom are generous. The backrest has a ski pass-through but does not fold.

The trunk is relatively spacious but handicapped by a very narrow opening. The trunk's irregular form and a bulge created by a speaker also limit the size of items that can be placed inside.

### **Convenience and safety features**

The cabin is very well finished in quality materials. Road noise as well as engine noise in average acceleration and up could be better suppressed. Total small-item storage space is unimpressive, as the glove compartment is small and the centre console not much better.

Gauges and controls are well displayed, except for the windshield wiper control, which is placed on the turn-signal lever. Nearly all the controls are lighted at night. The navigation system display screen is very hard to read when the sun hits it. The climate-control system is efficient.

*Photo : Lincoln*

The washer nozzles are placed under the edge of the hood where they can easily be blocked by snow and ice. A few seconds after the washers are used, the wipers make an extra swipe that inevitably smears the windshield: not very useful.

Safety features include dual front, side and side curtain airbags; four-wheel antilock disc brakes; stability control; and good headlights. There are four head restraints, but the rear restraints are fixed and very low, and not very safe. Visibility is generally good, but all the roof pillars and the rear head restraints create relatively large blind spots. It is difficult to judge distances when backing up.

In U.S. government tests, the MKS obtained a top, five-star rating for driver and for front-passenger protection in a frontal impact, and five stars for all-occupant protection in a side crash. It earned four stars for rollover resistance. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety awarded the MKS a Good rating, its highest, for driver protection in an offset frontal impact and for side and rear impact protection of all occupants.

### **Engine and transmission**

The 3.7-litre V6 derives from the 3.5-litre that powers several Ford products. The new V6 outputs 273 horsepower and 270 pound-feet of torque, and runs on regular gasoline. Premium gasoline will add two horsepower and 4 pound-feet of torque. Though these output ratings look good on paper, real-life acceleration and pickup are adequate, but no more. We're not talking sports car here. You have to press hard on the accelerator, which lacks progressiveness, to obtain some energy. The engine sounds coarse in average to heavy acceleration. It meets Tier2/Bin5 emissions control standards.

The six-speed automatic transmission functions very smoothly at all times and is well geared. However, it is slow to downshift and you have to jab hard on the accelerator to kick down the transmission. This transmission allows you to drive off in second gear. You have to unlock the gearshift lever to shift from Drive to Neutral, which is not desirable in an emergency situation. The all-wheel-drive system can direct up to 100% of torque to the rear wheels in case of front-wheel slippage, and it functions rapidly.

### **On the road**

The four-wheel independent suspension provides a very smooth ride on all road surfaces. Bumps can cause a firm reaction but are absorbed without harshness or discomfort. Suspension tuning is a good mix of compliance and firmness. Roadholding is good—adequate, but not outstanding on winding roads. This Lincoln is not a standout for agility. It drives with a solid feel.

The power steering is well tuned, stable and relatively precise. It provides little road sensation. The brakes are powerful, with good fade resistance, but the pedal is spongy in emergency braking.

## Inspection

In an inspection at a CAA-Quebec technical inspection centre, we saw that the MKS rests on a very sturdy platform that unfortunately is not protected by rustproofing. Several joints are unsealed. The shock absorber mounts lack protection. The plastic sheathing of the fuel lines and the rear brake lines collects grime, which could eventually lead to corrosion. Debris can get through openings under the front bumper and damage the air-conditioner condenser and power-steering cooler. The engine's overhead camshafts are chain driven.

## Conclusion

More a highway cruiser than a sport sedan, the MKS will be appreciated by people who prize comfort over high performance. The arrival of the EcoBoost engine scheduled for the 2010 model-year will make 355 horsepower and 350 pound-feet of torque available to dynamic-performance fans. For now, the MKS will attract buyers with its roomy comfort for four and relatively generous standard equipment.

**PROS:** comfortable seating, road comportment, powerful brakes, smooth transmission, solid platform, standard equipment

**CONS:** room for four only, small trunk opening, large blind spots especially  $\frac{3}{4}$  rear, perfectible sound isolation, jerky accelerator, wiper control needs rework

## 2009 LINCOLN MKS

**Engine:** 24-valve, 3.7-litre V6

**Horsepower:** 274 hp at 6,250 rpm (regular gas); 276 hp at 6,250 rpm (premium gas)

**Torque:** 270 lb-ft at 4,250 rpm (regular gas); 274 lb-ft at 4,250 rpm (premium gas)

**Transmission:** 6-speed automatic

**Suspension:** fully independent

**Brakes:** disc/disc

**Wheelbase:** 286.8 cm

**Length:** 518.4 cm

**Width:** 217.1 cm (with mirrors)

**Height:** 156.4 cm

**Weight:** 1,840 to 1,940 kg

**Tires:** P255/45R19; P245/45R20

**Maximum towing capacity:** 454 kg

**Airbags:** dual front, plus two side and two curtain airbags

### Fuel consumption with AWD:

Natural Resources Canada rating:

City: 12.9 L/100 km (22 mpg)

Test result: 11 L/100 km (26 mpg)

Highway: 8.8 L/100 km (32 mpg)

Test temperature: 2°C to 16°C

**CO<sub>2</sub> emissions:** 5,280 kg/20,000 km

**Fuel tank capacity:** 76 litres (AWD: 72 litres)

**Fuel requirement:** regular or premium grade gasoline

**Acceleration:**

0–100 km/h: 8 seconds

60–100 km/h: 5.9 seconds

**Competition:** Acura TL, Audi A4, BMW 3 Series, Cadillac CTS, Hyundai Genesis, Infiniti G37, Lexus ES 350, Mercedes C-Class, Saab 9-5, Volvo S60

**Warranty**

- Full basic coverage: 4 years/80,000 km
- Powertrain: 6 years/110,000 km
- Surface corrosion: 4 years/80,000 km
- Perforation damage: 5 years/unlimited km
- Emissions control system: 4 years/80,000 km (full coverage); 8 years/130,000 km (catalytic converter, electronic control module, onboard diagnostic system).

**Factory replacement parts**

- Rear bumper: \$1,458
- Front brake disc: \$120
- Brake pads: \$160
- Muffler: \$1,323
- Front fender: \$482

**Price according to trim level:** \$46,099

**Main options:**

- AWD system: \$2,200
- Vision package: \$5,000
- 20-inches wheels: \$1,100
- Sunroof: \$2,200
- Navigation system: \$3,200

**Price as tested:** \$55,479

**Freight and preparation:** \$1,400

**Dealers:** Quebec: 112                      Canada: 443

© April 2009. All rights reserved, CAA-Quebec