

FORD TO CUT 850 JOBS IN THE UK



Dearborn, Michigan's Ford Motor Company will cut as many as 850 jobs in the United Kingdom, and delay the introduction of a new version of its best-selling Transit van. Ford has offered voluntary separation packages to salaried and hourly workers as part of a plan to eliminate the positions by May. Ford is also seeking to renegotiate a wage increase offered to UK workers last year. Car sales in Britain fell 31% in January to 112,087 vehicles, the ninth consecutive monthly decline. Production of the Transit at Ford's Southampton, England, plant last year fell to 66,000 vehicles, from almost 75,000 the year before. About half of the vans made at the factory are sold outside of Britain. The Unite labor union said that Ford's proposals were a "betrayal" and that it may ballot members about holding a strike. The union said Ford of Europe earned \$1.06 billion in 2008, and was using the drop in demand as an excuse to reduce workforce numbers.

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