

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

<b>In re:</b>	)
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EA25-005	)
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**Final Decision That Certain Frontal Driver Air Bag Inflators Contain a Safety Defect**

Following the issuance of an initial decision, notice in the Federal Register, and public comment, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30118(b) and 49 CFR § 554.11, as set forth below, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has made a final decision that certain frontal air bag inflators with the marking “DTN60DB” contain a defect related to motor vehicle safety.<sup>1</sup> These air bag inflators have been imported into the United States by unknown importers, likely illegally. NHTSA is aware of twelve instances in which such inflators have ruptured in vehicles in the United States after the vehicle’s air bag was commanded to deploy. In these incidents, the rupture caused metal debris to be forcefully ejected into the vehicle’s occupant compartment, resulting in ten deaths and two severe injuries. After consideration of all relevant information, including responses to the initial decision, NHTSA has concluded that these inflators pose an unreasonable risk of serious injury or death to vehicle occupants.

**A. Inflators Subject to this Final Decision**

The inflators subject to this decision were likely manufactured in 2021 and 2022, and at or about the time of manufacture were etched or labeled with an identifier beginning

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<sup>1</sup> NHTSA’s Administrator is delegated authority by the Secretary of Transportation to carry out Chapter 301 of Title 49. 49 CFR § 501.2(a)(1); *see also id.* §§ 1.95(a); 501.7(d)(2).

“DTN60DB”<sup>2</sup> on the face of the inflator cap. Exemplar photographs of the marking or labeling are shown below:



DTN appears to be a reference to Jilin Province Detiannuo Safety Technology Co. Ltd. (DTN).<sup>3</sup> In addition to the DTN60DB identifier, the inflators have a label on the electrical connector side that includes a bar code containing the number sequence “144415654 666631” or “144415654 666633.” This label remains visible when the inflator is installed in an air bag module. An exemplar photo is shown below:



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<sup>2</sup> The manufacture date of the inflators appears to be included in the code etched onto the inflator cap. The code begins DTN60DB, is followed by four digits representing the year of manufacture, two digits representing the month of manufacture, two digits representing the day of manufacture, and ending in a part identification sequence number.

<sup>3</sup> In response to the initial decision, DTN stated that the subject inflators may be counterfeit. *See* <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/NHTSA-2026-0793-0003>; *see also infra* at 6.

The inflators subject to this final decision are described as the “subject inflators.” In at least ten of the twelve incidents outlined below, the subject inflators were installed as replacement (*i.e.*, aftermarket) equipment after the vehicle was involved in a previous crash in which a driver air bag deployed. NHTSA does not have information about how or why subject inflators were installed in the other two incidents.

To prevent further loss of life, NHTSA believes it necessary to issue a final decision, which has the effect of immediately prohibiting the sale, the offering for sale, the introducing or delivering for introduction into interstate commerce, or the importing into the United States of the subject inflators.

Because the subject inflators appear to have been imported illegally, NHTSA has been unable, despite substantial efforts, to obtain sufficient information to estimate the number of subject inflators in the United States.

## **B. Known Inflator Ruptures Resulting in Deaths and Injuries**

The agency is currently aware of twelve confirmed subject inflator ruptures in the United States.

- On May 30, 2023, an inflator marked DTN60DB, manufactured in December 2021 ruptured in a Model Year 2018 Chevrolet Malibu during a crash in Dallas, TX. The driver was killed by shrapnel expelled from the ruptured inflator.
- On June 11, 2023, an inflator marked DTN60DB, manufactured in November 2021 ruptured in a Model Year 2020 Chevrolet Malibu during a crash in Sarasota, FL. The driver was killed by shrapnel expelled from the ruptured inflator.
- On September 4, 2023, an inflator marked DTN60DB, manufactured in November 2021 ruptured in a Model Year 2021 Chevrolet Malibu during a crash

in Philadelphia, PA. The driver was severely injured by shrapnel expelled from the ruptured inflator.

- On October 25, 2023, an inflator marked DTN60DB, with an unknown date of manufacture ruptured in a Model Year 2020 Chevrolet Malibu during a crash in Fort Worth, TX. The driver was severely injured by shrapnel expelled from the ruptured inflator.
- On March 1, 2024, an inflator marked DTN60DB, manufactured in December 2021 ruptured in a Model Year 2022 Chevrolet Malibu during a crash in Oklahoma City, OK. The driver was killed by shrapnel expelled from the ruptured inflator.
- On February 3, 2025, an inflator marked DTN60DB, manufactured in June 2022 ruptured in a Model Year 2017 Hyundai Sonata during a crash in Phoenix, AZ. The driver was killed by shrapnel expelled from the ruptured inflator.
- On July 30, 2025, an inflator marked DTN60DB, manufactured in March 2022 ruptured in a Model Year 2019 Hyundai Sonata during a crash in West Valley City, UT. The driver was killed by shrapnel expelled from the ruptured inflator.
- On September 26, 2025, an inflator marked DTN60DB, manufactured in November 2021 ruptured in a Model Year 2020 Chevrolet Malibu during a crash in Hayward, CA. The driver was killed by shrapnel expelled from the ruptured inflator.
- On October 31, 2025, an inflator marked DTN60DB, manufactured in December 2021 ruptured in a Model Year 2018 Chevrolet Malibu during a crash in Wichita, KS. The driver was killed by shrapnel expelled from the ruptured inflator.
- On December 16, 2025, an inflator marked DTN60DB, manufactured in December 2021 ruptured in a Model Year 2019 Chevrolet Malibu during a crash in Toledo, OH. The driver was killed by shrapnel expelled from the ruptured inflator.
- On December 16, 2025, an inflator marked DTN60DB, manufactured in January 2022 ruptured in a Model Year 2018 Hyundai Sonata during a crash in Austin, TX. The driver was killed by shrapnel expelled from the ruptured inflator.
- On February 16, 2026, an inflator marked DTN60DB, manufactured in June 2022 ruptured in a Model Year 2020 Chevrolet Malibu during a crash in Clarksdale, MS. The driver was killed by shrapnel expelled from the ruptured inflator.

Although NHTSA is only aware of ruptures involving subject inflators installed as aftermarket equipment in Chevrolet Malibu or Hyundai Sonata vehicles, there is no information indicating the problem is limited to those vehicles.

### **C. Responses to Comments on NHTSA’s Initial Decision**

On April 2, 2026, NHTSA issued an “initial decision that certain air bag inflators manufactured by DTN contain a defect related to motor vehicle safety.”<sup>4</sup> NHTSA received three comments in response to its initial decision: a comment from DTN, a comment from Larry Dembrun, and a comment from the Automotive Safety Council. Mr. Dembrun’s comment was not relevant to the underlying initial decision; therefore, the agency is not providing a response.<sup>5</sup> The Automotive Safety Council (ASC) submitted a comment that generally supported NHTSA’s initial decision, but did not provide any information specific to the subject inflators.<sup>6</sup> ASC generally cited findings from the Automotive Anti-Counterfeiting Council (A2C2) regarding counterfeit air bags and inferior quality parts, as well as field fatalities and deployment test failures documented by A2C2.<sup>7</sup>

DTN submitted a comment claiming on two bases that the initial decision “lack[ed] reasonable grounds.”<sup>8</sup> First, DTN stated that “it [cannot] be proven that the accidents were caused by defective inflators,” noting that “[t]he inflator is only one component of the system; improper installation or defects in other components can all lead to an accident,”<sup>9</sup> and that “the related accidents were not necessarily caused by a defect in the inflator.”<sup>10</sup> NHTSA disagrees. In

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.regulations.gov/document/NHTSA-2026-0793-0001>.

<sup>5</sup> *See* <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/NHTSA-2026-0793-0005>.

<sup>6</sup> *See* <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/NHTSA-2026-0793-0004>.

<sup>7</sup> *See id.*

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/NHTSA-2026-0793-0003>.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

each of the twelve incidents addressed in this decision, a subject inflator with the DTN60DB labeling ruptured. The investigative file contains direct support, including several autopsy and police reports, that establish the subject inflators ruptured and that the injuries and fatalities were directly caused by the ruptured subject inflators.<sup>11</sup> DTN provides neither any alternative cause for any of the incidents nor any evidence supporting any alternative cause.

Second, DTN states that “it cannot be proven that the inflators in question were indeed manufactured by DTN,” that “[o]ur company believes that the inflator in question is not a product manufactured by DTN, but rather a counterfeit of our product manufactured by another company,”<sup>12</sup> and that it “has never directly sold any inflatable devices to the US market” except to the law firm Morgan & Morgan.<sup>13</sup> DTN did not provide any evidence to support its allegations that these devices may be counterfeit. And in any event, it does not matter.

Based upon the information before NHTSA, it is appropriate to reach a final decision regardless of whether DTN can be proven to have manufactured the subject inflators. NHTSA may do so if it finds a “defect . . . related to motor vehicle safety.” 49 U.S.C. § 30118. NHTSA has determined there is a defect related to motor vehicle safety based on evidence of subject inflator ruptures and the associated severe risk, lives lost, and serious injuries to date. DTN’s unsubstantiated belief that a third party has produced counterfeit inflators falsely bearing DTN’s labeling does not impact or diminish NHTSA’s finding that the subject inflators contain a defect that poses an unreasonable risk to motor vehicle safety. This is because all known subject

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<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., <https://static.nhtsa.gov/odi/inv/2025/INOT-EA25005-40564P1.pdf> (describing the ruptured inflator cap deploying “in the upper chest with sufficient force to cause immediate fatal injuries”); <https://static.nhtsa.gov/odi/inv/2025/INOT-EA25005-40574P1.pdf> (finding penetrative trauma to the neck from a cylindrical object marked “DTN60DB” as the cause of death); and <https://static.nhtsa.gov/odi/inv/2025/INOT-EA25005-40388P1.pdf> (finding a rounded metal object embedded in the brain).

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/NHTSA-2026-0793-0003>.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

inflators that have been involved in a crash have ruptured and caused severe or fatal injuries to drivers—even if those inflators were not manufactured by DTN.

Based on NHTSA’s final decision, by statute, it must order the manufacturer to conduct a recall, by notifying owners, purchasers, and dealers of the defect and remedying the defect. *See* 49 U.S.C. § 30118(b)(2).<sup>14</sup> Under the Safety Act, the term “manufacturer” includes any person “manufacturing or assembling . . . motor vehicle equipment” and any person “importing . . . motor vehicle equipment for resale.” *Id.* § 30102(a)(6). NHTSA is therefore ordering each manufacturer, including each importer, of the inflators to conduct a recall. In addition, the order makes it illegal for any person to sell, offer for sale, introduce or deliver for introduction in interstate commerce, or import into the United States these inflators. *See id.* §§ 30112(a)(3), 30120(i)-(j).

#### **D. Background Regarding Air Bag Inflators**

Air bags are safety equipment designed to protect vehicle occupants in the event of a crash. The subject inflators are pyrotechnic gas-generators. In general, an air bag inflator is a component part of an air bag module. An air bag module typically consists of a mounting bracket, inflator (device that generates gas), cushion (bag that fills with gas), cover (decorative part that matches the vehicle interior), and connecting wires.

Air bags, when properly deployed, provide significant safety benefits. The rupture of an air bag inflator during deployment is rare and extremely dangerous. Instead of remaining intact within the module and releasing gas to inflate the cushion, the metal inflator explodes—ejecting

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<sup>14</sup> “If the Secretary decides . . . that the vehicle or equipment contains the defect . . . the Secretary shall order the manufacturer to (A) give notification under section 30119 of this title to the owners, purchasers, and dealers of the vehicle or equipment of the defect or noncompliance; and (B) remedy the defect . . . under section 30120 of this title.” 49 U.S.C. § 30118(b)(2).

metal shrapnel from the module in a manner likely to kill or severely injure any human with which it makes direct contact.

### **E. Legal Background on Safety Defect and Legal Consequences**

The National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act (Safety Act), as amended, requires manufacturers (including importers) to conduct a recall for safety defects in motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment. *See* 49 U.S.C. § 30118-20; *see also id.* § 30102(a)(6). Specifically, a manufacturer must notify NHTSA, owners, dealers, and distributors of any “defect . . . related to motor vehicle safety.” 49 U.S.C. § 30118. The Safety Act defines “defect” as “includ[ing] any defect in performance, construction, a component, or material of a motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment.” 49 U.S.C. § 30102(a)(3). “Motor vehicle safety” means “the performance of a motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment in a way that protects the public against unreasonable risk of accidents occurring because of the design, construction, or performance of a motor vehicle, and against unreasonable risk of death or injury in an accident, and includes nonoperational safety of a motor vehicle.” *Id.* § 30101(a)(8). A defect that leads to failure of a vital component, such as an air bag inflator rupturing rather than protecting the driver, presents an unreasonable risk to safety. *See United States v. General Motors Corp.* 561 F.2d 923, 929 (D.C. Cir. 1977) (“*Pitman Arms*”).

Any safety defect determination on replacement equipment,<sup>15</sup> whether made by NHTSA or by a manufacturer, prohibits any person from “sell[ing], offer[ing] for sale, introduc[ing] or

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<sup>15</sup> Replacement equipment is “motor vehicle equipment . . . that is not original equipment” “installed on a motor vehicle at the time of delivery to the first purchaser.” 49 U.S.C. § 30102(b)(1)(C), (D). Under the Safety Act, an air bag inflator used to replace a previously deployed air bag is replacement equipment. *See id.* § 30102(a)(8), (b)(1)(C), (D). An equipment manufacturer, including an importer, is responsible under the Safety Act for recalling replacement equipment. *See id.* §§ 30102(a)(6), 30118(b).

deliver[ing] for introduction in interstate commerce, or import into the United States” the equipment subject to the determination. *Id.* § 30112(a)(3); *see id.* § 30120(i)-(j). In other words, this final decision finding a safety defect makes the sale by any person of either a subject inflator or a module containing a subject inflator illegal.

#### **F. The Agency’s Investigation and Final Decision that the Subject Inflators Contain a Defect Related to Motor Vehicle Safety**

On October 21, 2025, NHTSA’s Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) opened an Engineering Analysis (EA25005) to investigate allegations of ruptures involving air bag inflators that it identified as manufactured by DTN.

NHTSA’s investigation was prompted by reports of eight vehicle crashes in which a rupture of an inflator marked “DTN60DB” occurred during the deployment of the driver side air bag.

On June 16, 2023, ODI received a Vehicle Owner Questionnaire (VOQ #11527380) alleging that the rupture of a driver side air bag inflator caused fatal injuries to the driver of a MY 2020 Chevrolet Malibu. ODI’s assessment of the rupture indicated that the air bag inflator was not original equipment.

From June 2023 to July 2024, ODI became aware of four additional ruptures involving substandard air bag modules equipped on Chevrolet Malibu vehicles. In March 2025, NHTSA learned of another rupture involving a suspected substandard, aftermarket inflator that was equipped in a MY 2017 Hyundai Sonata. The driver of this vehicle sustained fatal injuries that appeared related to the rupture. In August 2025, NHTSA received a similar report of a fatal air bag rupture in a MY 2019 Hyundai Sonata. In October 2025, NHTSA learned of a fatal air bag rupture in a MY 2020 Chevrolet Malibu. Photographs of the air bag components in these three

crashes showed the “DTN60DB” marking on the inflator cap. Further investigation of the inflator fragments in three of the prior incidents confirmed that “DTN60DB” was etched on those ruptured inflators.

After the investigation was opened, NHTSA learned of four additional crashes involving ruptures of inflators that the agency later identified as having the “DTN60DB” marking. One rupture occurred in a crash in late October 2025, two additional ruptures occurred in December 2025, and a fourth in February 2026. Each of these inflator ruptures resulted in fatal injuries to the driver, for a total of twelve crashes involving ten deaths and two severe injuries.

As part of its investigation, NHTSA sent an information request to DTN on December 23, 2025 asking for information about the subject components.<sup>16</sup> DTN responded on February 3, 2026 with certain production and component data.<sup>17</sup> NHTSA sent DTN a supplemental information request on March 6, 2026 seeking additional information.<sup>18</sup> DTN failed to respond by the due date of March 23, 2026 and, despite submitting a comment in response to the initial decision, has still not responded as of the date of this final decision.<sup>19</sup>

Because of the numerous ruptures and associated severe risk, lives lost, and serious injuries to date, NHTSA is issuing this final decision concluding that the subject inflators contain a defect related to motor vehicle safety posing an unreasonable risk of death or serious injury in the event of a crash.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://static.nhtsa.gov/odi/inv/2025/INIM-EA25005-34958.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> See <https://static.nhtsa.gov/odi/inv/2025/INRL-EA25005-37655P1.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> <https://static.nhtsa.gov/odi/inv/2025/INIM-EA25005-40172.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> See <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/NHTSA-2026-0793-0003>.

## **G. Order**

Based on the findings and conclusions set forth above, it is hereby ordered that no person may sell, offer for sale, introduce or deliver for introduction into interstate commerce, or importing into the United States any subject inflator, including: (1) any air bag inflator with the marking “DTN60DB,” (2) any air bag inflator with a label on the electrical connector side with a bar code containing the number sequence “144415654 666631” or “144415654 666633,” (3) any air bag module that contains an air bag inflator with the marking “DTN60DB,” and (4) any air bag module that contains an air bag inflator with a label on the electrical connector side with a bar code containing the number sequence “144415654 666631” or “144415654 666633.” *See* 49 U.S.C. §§ 30112(a)(3); *see also id.* 30120(i)-(j).

It is further hereby ordered that any manufacturer of the subject inflators, including but not limited to any person who has imported the subject inflators, shall provide notification of the defect to owners, purchasers, and dealers of the air bag inflators in accordance with 49 U.S.C. § 30119 and remedy the defect in accordance with 49 U.S.C. § 30120.<sup>20</sup> In addition, any such manufacturer shall file a report with NHTSA consistent with the requirements of 49 CFR Part 573 no later than five business days after it learns of this Order.

By issuing this Order, NHTSA is not forgoing any remedies available to it under the law, including without limitation any civil or criminal action to seek penalties or other appropriate relief. NHTSA reserves the rights and remedies available to enforce any violation of law and to enforce this Order.

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<sup>20</sup> *See* 49 U.S.C. § 30102(a)(6).

This Order does not waive or modify DTN's or any other person's responsibility and obligation to comply with all applicable laws.

This Order is effective upon the date of issuance.

Issued on: April 29, 2026



**Jonathan C. Morrison**  
*Administrator*