

NHTSA at Work: Safety Agency Oversees Free Air Bag Repairs for Millions of Americans

Snapshot: The Takata air bag recalls are the largest and most complex vehicle recalls in U.S. history. Currently, these recalls involve 19 vehicle manufacturers and approximately 50 million Takata air bags in an estimated 37 million vehicles in the United States. The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has a steadfast commitment to the safety of the American public, and has taken unprecedented steps in overseeing the Takata recalls to fulfill this commitment. Below is a brief overview of the efforts NHTSA has taken to ensure that every defective Takata air bag is replaced as quickly as possible.

NHTSA behind the scenes: How Federal regulators oversee the Takata air bag recalls.

In its oversight of the Takata air bag recalls, NHTSA communicates regularly with the affected vehicle manufacturers and has utilized an Independent Monitor to assist in this work. Some tools utilized in this effort include regular recurring telephone calls and recurring in-person meetings, and the issuance of the Independent Monitor's recommendations on issues like coordinated messaging to reduce consumer confusion and opportunities to enhance dealer networks to expedite repairs. NHTSA requires the vehicle manufacturers to provide enhanced, regular updates on the pace of repairs, the availability of repair parts, and initiatives being considered and implemented to improve recall completion rates. NHTSA does not hesitate to use its authorities to ensure public safety or to communicate expectations.

NHTSA leading the way: How Federal regulators help speed up repairs and keep the public informed.

- ❖ **May 2015 Takata Consent Order:** NHTSA required Takata to propose a customer outreach plan that assists the original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) in maximizing recall completion rates. The agency pushed Takata to come up with innovative means to bring consumer attention to the safety risks posed by the recalled Takata air bags.
- ❖ **NHTSA Root Cause Announcement:** NHTSA made publicly available the testing that supported its [root cause analysis](#) on September 23, 2016. NHTSA also issued [an advisory](#) when it learned of testing that demonstrated a subset of air bags are at a substantially higher risk of explosion.
- ❖ **NHTSA Coordinated Remedy Order:** NHTSA ordered vehicle manufacturers to accelerate their repairs of defective Takata air bags. NHTSA required the companies to submit recall engagement plans that include innovative methodologies and techniques for maximizing recall completion rates. The agency also appointed an Independent Monitor to develop and implement additional recommendations aimed at enhancing completion rates. In consultation with NHTSA, the Independent Monitor has made numerous recommendations to automakers.

- ❖ **NHTSA's Coordinated Remedy Program:** Recognizing that the unprecedented Takata recalls involve unique challenges, in November 2015 NHTSA established a [Coordinated Remedy Program](#), which prioritizes vehicles to accelerate the repairs and ensure that the highest-risk vehicles are fixed first. Vehicle manufacturers prioritize repair parts for [older air bags](#)—believed to be higher risk—while working to replace them all. As part of the Program, NHTSA urged the vehicle manufacturers to take innovative and proactive steps to maximize recall completion rates, including conducting creative consumer outreach campaigns at nontraditional venues such as sporting events and through large employers, offering mobile repair programs, and door-to-door community engagement.
- ❖ **Proactive Safety Principles:** NHTSA finalized a historic agreement with 18 automakers to help catch safety defects before they transform into massive recalls, including improving the quality of data. NHTSA has also participated in industry-led forums aimed at sharing best practices to improve recall completion rates.
- ❖ **Safe Cars Save Lives - Check for Recalls Campaign:** NHTSA launched a new national public awareness campaign that urges consumers to check for open recalls and to get their vehicles repaired as soon as possible. The agency highlights the campaign during Daylight Saving Time—when clocks [spring forward](#) and [fall back](#) each year; however, NHTSA recommends that consumers check for recalls periodically and sign up for recall alerts at [NHTSA.gov/Alerts](#) to get e-mails when their vehicles are under recall.
- ❖ **Safe Cars Save Lives - Check for Recalls Bus Tour:** NHTSA conducted a four-State, nine-city bus tour—through the highest risk areas for Takata air bag explosions—to find vehicle owners with open recalls and to raise awareness of the NHTSA's VIN lookup tool. By visiting [NHTSA.gov/recalls](#), consumers can use a free online search tool to quickly check their vehicles for recalls.
- ❖ **Takata Recall Spotlight Website:** NHTSA created a dedicated [website](#) for the Takata air bag recalls that provides consumers with information and new developments. The site includes FAQs, repair completion rates, videos, and tools consumers can use to find out if their vehicle is under recall.
- ❖ **Record Civil Penalties:** In 2014 and 2015, NHTSA issued a record number of civil penalties, including the largest in the agency's history against Takata. NHTSA brought Takata to justice after years of deception to the Federal Government, automakers, and the public at large.
- ❖ **Takata Public Information Meeting:** NHTSA held a public meeting to explain to the public in clear, non-technical terms the issues involving defective Takata air bags.
- ❖ **Retooling Recalls:** NHTSA hosted a day-long workshop that brought together leading transportation officials, automotive industry representatives, safety advocates, and researchers to examine how to increase unacceptably low recall completion rates.

- ❖ **Fiat Chrysler Consent Order:** Among other performance obligations, NHTSA required Fiat Chrysler to develop and scientifically test a program designed to increase the effectiveness of recall notifications, conduct a comprehensive study on consumer participation in recall and consumer satisfaction campaigns, and develop and implement a program designed to increase customer participation in recalls.
- ❖ **BMW Consent Order:** NHTSA required that BMW develop and implement a program to train dealers on the importance of complying with the prohibition of selling unrepaired, recalled vehicles, and a program to use information technology to improve dealers' access to information necessary to maximize completion of open recalls on vehicles in the dealers' inventories.
- ❖ **Maryland Pilot Test of Recall Notifications:** NHTSA announced a 2-year pilot program to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of a State process for informing consumers of open recalls at the time of motor vehicle registration in the State. NHTSA awarded a [grant](#) to the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration to help reach more consumers with the critical message of repairing open recalls on their vehicles.
- ❖ **Direct Consumer Outreach:** In cooperation with the Independent Monitor of Takata and the Coordinated Remedy Program, NHTSA has engaged in direct consumer outreach and coalition building in key high-risk areas. In 2017, NHTSA launched a geo-targeted campaign in the eight highest risk areas to increase public awareness in those locations about these dangerous air bags.
- ❖ **Completion Rate Data:** NHTSA continuously monitors repair rates for vehicles affected by the Takata air bag recalls. To keep consumers informed on the current status of the recalls, NHTSA added [improved search functions to](#) its [website](#). Consumers can view Takata air bag repair rates by priority group, and repair rates over time for each affected vehicle manufacturer—in addition to repair rates for driver-side air bags, passenger-side air bags, and all air bags. Users can also perform advanced searches using recall campaign numbers.
- ❖ **Takata Monitor Communication Recommendations:** Under NHTSA's direction, the Independent Monitor has provided [coordinated communications recommendations](#) to the affected vehicle manufacturers based on [lessons learned](#), and works with them to incorporate the recommendations into their individual consumer communications.
- ❖ **“Do Not Drive” Vehicles with Takata Air Bags:** NHTSA helped [spread the word](#) when Ford and Mazda announced a “do not drive” warning on certain MY 2006 Ford Ranger and Mazda B-Series trucks with defective Takata air bags, based on new testing. The new testing found a manufacturing defect on top of the high-heat and aging defect. NHTSA conducted a radio tour and social media campaign, and issued a [second public plea](#) to

ensure the message reached owners in markets where many of the vehicles were located.

- ❖ **Takata Monitor Find-and-Fix Campaign:** With [NHTSA's support](#), the Independent Monitor and the affected vehicle manufacturers piloted canvassing programs, and are currently assisting Takata in community efforts in Florida and California to get recalled vehicles repaired immediately.
- ❖ **Letters to 12 Vehicle Manufacturers:** The end of 2017 marked the first target deadline for vehicle manufacturers to repair all vehicles in Priority Groups 1 through 3. None of the 12 automakers with vehicles in these three priority groups met the target deadline. NHTSA requested a meeting with each of the 12 vehicle manufacturers to discuss detailed remediation plans. The 12 manufacturers are BMW, Daimler Vans, Daimler Trucks North America (DTNA), Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA), Ford, GM, Honda, Mazda, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Subaru, and Toyota. Recall completion data by priority group and manufacturer is available on [NHTSA.gov](#).