

Zone B covers states that have moderate temperatures and humidity. NHTSA projects that it will take 10-15 years for the propellant to degrade to the point where it is unsafe. Zone B includes Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

Zone C covers states with lower temperatures and humidity. NHTSA projects that it will take 15-20 years for the propellant to degrade to the point where it is unsafe. Zone C includes Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

Affected vehicles

The recalls cover 12 automakers selling vehicles in the U.S. Manufacturers are sending notices to vehicle owners, and NHTSA has asked for help from insurers, the media and the public in tracking down vehicles that have changed hands since the original purchase or registration. A list of all affected vehicles and manufacturers can be found at www.safercar.gov/rs/takata/takatalist.html.

As of Aug. 12, slightly more than 10 million airbags have been replaced, NHTSA says. These include models from the following manufacturers: BMW, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, Ford, General Motors, Honda, Mazda, Mercedes-Benz, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Subaru and Toyota (see www.safercar.gov/rs/takata/takata-completion-rates.html).

Many of these are interim fixes. Because of supply constraints, some manufacturers are replacing older Takata inflators with newly manufactured versions of the same type. These units eventually will need to be replaced, too.

Older Hondas and Acuras need critical fixes

The agency in June flagged recalls for a group of 2001-03 Honda and Acura models as especially critical. U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx in a statement advised owners to stop driving these vehicles unless heading straight to the repair shop. Test data indicate that airbag inflators in these models have rupture rates as high as 50 percent. The agency says 8 of the 10 confirmed U.S. fatalities due to Takata ruptures were in these vehicles.

They are the 2001-2002 Honda Accord and Civic, 2002 Honda CR-V and Odyssey, 2003 Honda Pilot, 2002-2003 Acura TL and 2003 Acura CL. The affected models were recalled between 2008 and 2011, and Honda reported in June that more than 70 percent have already been repaired. Still, the automaker and the federal government are asking for help in locating owners of about 313,000 vehicles with the dangerous airbags that haven't been replaced.

Key message for consumers

The key message for consumers is to pay attention to any manufacturer recall notice. The particular danger of the defective Takata inflators makes it even more crucial that people who get recall letters take their vehicles to the dealership for replacement without delay.

Here is some suggested guidance to share with vehicle owners:

- Check NHTSA's online recall VIN lookup tool at www.safercar.gov/checkforrecalls if you haven't already received a notice. If the vehicle can be fixed now, meaning the needed parts are available, the website will indicate that the recall is "incomplete." Get your vehicle fixed right away. If the vehicle can't be fixed yet, the website will display the message that the recall is "incomplete – parts not available." In this case, contact your dealer to see when you can bring in your vehicle for repair.
- Be aware that you may have to bring your vehicle back to the dealer at least twice. On an interim basis, replacing the older inflator with a newer version reduces the safety risk until a final remedy inflator can be produced and installed.
- Ask your dealer for a loaner vehicle if you feel uncomfortable driving a vehicle that can't yet be repaired. Several major manufacturers are making loaners available. Note that it is illegal to disconnect airbags.
- Airbags save lives and reduce injuries. The vast majority of Takata airbags will perform as expected. NHTSA estimates that 39,886 lives have been saved by frontal airbags as of 2013.

More information about the Takata airbag recalls can be found at www.safercar.gov/rs/takata/index.html. A list of frequently asked questions about the Takata airbag recall can be found at www.safercar.gov/rs/takata/takata-faq.html.

