

# BMW recalls 1.6M 3-Series cars for air bag problem

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(AP)—BMW is expanding a recall of its most popular models to fix an air bag problem that is hitting much of the global auto industry.

The German automaker says it will recall 1.6 million 3-Series cars from model years 2000 to 2006 across the world, including 574,000 in the U.S.

The company said Wednesday that it's a precaution because other automakers using similar systems have reported problems.

Air bag inflators in systems made by Takata Corp. can rupture. If that happens, the bags might not work properly, and shards could fly out and cause injury.

The problem is responsible for millions of recalled vehicles during the past few years made by manufacturers such as Chrysler, Ford, Honda, Mazda, Nissan and Toyota. The recalls have mostly been of vehicles in states with hot and humid weather.

BMW said it has no reports of problems in its vehicles. Dealers will replace the passenger-side front air bags. The new recall excludes 42,000 BMWs recalled in May 2013 for the same problem. The company says it is recalling all vehicles equipped with potentially faulty air bag systems regardless of where they were sold.

In June, the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration began

investigating air bags made by Takata, a Tokyo-based supplier of seat belts, air bags, steering wheels and other auto parts.

The agency said it received six reports of air bags rupturing in Florida and Puerto Rico. Three people were injured in those cases. It had estimated 1.1 million vehicles in the U.S. could be affected, but the total is likely to climb.

The government says it wanted to act quickly in warm states while it continues to investigate the issue.

"Based on the limited data available at this time, NHTSA supports efforts by automakers to address the immediate risk in areas that have consistently hot, humid conditions over extended periods of time," the agency said in a statement.

Takata said in a statement Wednesday that it is supporting the NHTSA investigation and its customers with technical analysis and replacement parts. "Our objective is to do all that is possible to ensure the safety and well-being of the public," the statement said.

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