

# Automakers to recall 5M vehicles for another air bag problem

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In this Nov. 1, 2007 file photo, a 2008 Honda Accord Coupe, left, is driven off the assembly line as a 2008 Acura TL waits during production at Honda of America Manufacturing's Marysville Auto Plant in Marysville, Ohio. Continental Automotive Systems says in documents filed with the government, Thursday, Feb. 4, 2016, that moisture can get inside its air bag control computers, causing the power supplies to corrode and fail. If that happens, air bags may not inflate in a crash or they could deploy without a crash. Documents say Continental will notify automakers, who will recall cars dating to 2006. Already Honda, Fiat Chrysler and Mercedes have issued recalls. (AP Photo/Paul Vernon)

Another problem has developed with automotive air bags, and this one will bring recalls of up to 5 million vehicles worldwide.

Continental Automotive Systems says in documents filed with the U.S. government that moisture can get inside its air bag control computers, causing the power supplies to corrode and fail. If that happens, air bags may not inflate in a crash or they could deploy without a crash.

The documents, posted Thursday on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website, said Continental will notify automakers, who will recall cars dating as far back as 2006.

Already Honda, Fiat Chrysler, Volkswagen and Mercedes have issued recalls, and some unidentified Mazda and Volvo Truck vehicles are included. Continental says less than 2 million of the affected vehicles are in the U.S.

Automakers will replace the computers at no cost to owners, according to documents. Honda reported two injuries from the problem.

The announcement comes in the middle of a crisis involving Takata Corp. air bag inflators. About 24 million U.S. vehicles are being recalled for that problem, which is the largest automotive recall in U.S. history. Takata's inflators can explode with too much force, blowing apart a metal canister and sending shrapnel into the passenger compartment. At least 11 people have died worldwide from the problem, and 139 have been injured.

In the documents, Continental says its problem first surfaced in January 2008 when it analyzed a malfunctioning control unit that was removed from a Mercedes. The company continued to investigate, and in early 2011, Continental was told of two inadvertent air bag deployments in Mercedes and Fiat Chrysler vehicles.

Last year, Honda reported two malfunctions in crashes involving 2008 Accords, and U.S. safety regulators began investigating, according to the documents.

Continental said it knows of more than 600 parts that were returned due to the problem.

On Wednesday night, Honda said it would recall 364,787 2008 to 2010 Accord sedans worldwide because of the issue. The company says the air bags may not inflate in a crash. Honda said it has two reports of people being hurt because the air bags didn't deploy.

On Thursday, Fiat Chrysler announced the recall of 112,000 2009 Dodge Journeys and 2008 and 2009 Dodge Grand Caravan and Chrysler Town & Country minivans for the same problem. The Fiat Chrysler recall also includes the 2009 Volkswagen Routan minivan, which was made by FCA. Fiat Chrysler recalled vehicles that do not have Takata air bags.

Last year, Mercedes recalled 126,260 C-Class cars from 2008 and 2009 and 2010 GLK350 vehicles.

The U.S. safety investigation began in August after NHTSA found 19 complaints from drivers that air bags didn't inflate in crashes of older Honda Accords.

A driver in Belleview, Florida, was injured when his car hit a concrete wall at 50 miles per hour and the air bags didn't inflate, according to one complaint. Several others said the computer had to be replaced and they were charged around \$500.

"This also means that the safety of the vehicle passengers and operators are in jeopardy and potentially face serious injury or death," another

complainant wrote. People filing complaints are not identified in the NHTSA database.

Continental says any malfunction will cause the air bag control computer to shut down, and that will trigger a dashboard warning light.

Honda said it would notify owners about the problem, but repair parts won't be available until fall. Drivers with an activated supplemental restraint system light should visit a dealer for a repair from the parts on hand, the company said.

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