

Fiat Chrysler recalling 1.9M vehicles for airbag defect linked to 3 deaths

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David Shepardson
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WASHINGTON -- Fiat Chrysler Automobiles **said today** it is recalling 1.9 million vehicles worldwide for an airbag defect that is linked to three deaths and five injuries.

The recall is to resolve a defect that may prevent deployment of airbags and seat-belt pretensioners in some crashes. The recall includes models sold between 2010 and 2014, including the Chrysler Sebring, 200, Dodge Caliber, Avenger, Jeep Patriot and Compass SUVs.

<http://www.autonews.com/article/20160915/OEM11/160919905/fiat-chrysler-recalling-1.9m-vehicles-for-airbag-defect-linked-to-3>

It said the recall also includes the 2012-2013 Lancia Flavia midsize car.

About 1.4 million of the vehicles covered by the recall are in the U.S.

Another 142,959 units are in Canada.

The recall is the latest in a series affecting tens of millions of the devices for a series of problems.

Last week, General Motors said it would recall nearly 4.3 million vehicles worldwide due to a software defect that can prevent airbags from deploying during a crash, a flaw already linked to one death and three injuries. That defect is similar but not identical to the Fiat Chrysler issue.

Fiat Chrysler said the issue occurred when vehicles equipped with a particular occupant restraint control module and front impact sensor wiring of a specific design are involved in certain collisions.

GM said in its recall that the sensing and diagnostic module that controls airbag deployment has a software defect that may prevent frontal airbags from deploying in certain "rare circumstances."

Fiat Chrysler said it no longer uses the occupant restraint controllers or wire routing design. The notice did not say when it will begin recall repairs, which spokesman Eric Mayne said the automaker is "finalizing."

Broader airbag problems

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Automakers and the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration have been grappling with numerous airbag recall issues.

In February, Continental Automotive Systems said it supplied potentially defective airbag control units to 5 million vehicles built over a five-year period. It said the units may fail and airbags may not deploy in a crash or may inadvertently deploy without warning.

In August, NHTSA said it was upgrading and expanding a probe of more than 8 million airbag inflators made by ARC Automotive Inc. after a driver was killed in Canada when an inflator ruptured in a Hyundai Motor Co. vehicle.

And in May, NHTSA said automakers will recall another 35 million to 40 million Takata airbag inflators that could rupture and send deadly metal fragments flying. More than 100 million inflators worldwide have been deemed defective and are linked to at least 14 deaths and 100 injuries.

Despite the recalls and continued government scrutiny, NHTSA has said it is clear "airbags save lives." It estimates that frontal air bags saved 2,400 lives in 2014.