

US directs GM to recall 5.9 mn autos with Takata airbags

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US air safety authorities ordered GM to recall nearly six million autos with Takata airbags

US auto safety authorities ordered General Motors to recall nearly six million pickup trucks and sport utility vehicles to replace defective Takata airbags, officials said Monday.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) rejected a four-year old appeal from GM to exempt it from a recall order to replace the Takata [airbags](#), which are prone to exploding in warmer regions.

The agency said exemptions like the one sought by GM are "virtually never granted," as it rejected GM's arguments that Takata airbags in its vehicles posed an "inconsequential" risk to consumers.

"The threshold of evidence necessary to prove the inconsequentiality of a defect such as this one—involving the potential performance failure of safety-critical equipment—is very difficult to overcome," the agency said in its decision.

"GM bears a heavy burden, and the evidence and argument GM provides suffers from numerous,

significant deficiencies," the agency continued.

The decision cited more than 300 public comments from consumers and others opposing the exemption for GM. It also dismissed the significance of the lack of known accidents tied to GM from Takata airbags thus far.

"That a rupture has not yet occurred or been reported does not mean that a rupture will not occur in the future, and it provides no support for the notion that in the event of a rupture, the result will be inconsequential to safety."

GM will recall 5.9 million vehicles in the United States and another one million vehicles overseas, a spokesman said.

The recall pertains to a dozen vehicles from model years 2007-2014, including the Chevrolet Silverado, the GMC Sierra and the GMC Yukon, the NHTSA said.

GM said safety and trust of consumers "is at the forefront of everything we do at General Motors," according to a statement.

"Based on data generated through independent scientific evaluation conducted over several years, we disagree with NHTSA's position. However, we will abide by NHTSA's decision and begin taking the necessary steps."

The agency gave GM 30 days to establish a schedule for notifying vehicle owners and repairing the vehicles.

NHTSA has confirmed 18 fatalities in the United States due to Takata airbag explosions and another 250 cases in which people have been injured. About 63 million airbags have been recalled.

The Center for Auto Safety applauded the NHTSA, calling its decision "important" in a Monday tweet.

In a 2019 letter to NHTSA, the nonprofit said a petition for inconsequentiality "is typically submitted and granted when a [vehicle](#) fails to conform to certain [safety](#) standards but is at least as safe as if it had conformed.

That is not the case here. Instead, GM is trying to avoid a recall for products that it knows are unsafe by arguing that those products are merely less unsafe than its competitors."

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