



BMW recalling 44K vehicles in Canada over potentially deadly airbag issue



BMW is recalling more than 44,000 vehicles in Canada and 394,000 in the U.S. due to faulty airbag inflators that could potentially cause serious or fatal injuries. BMW owners of various models can check with the company if their vehicle is affected. (Sam Nar/CBC)

German carmaker BMW is recalling 394,000 vehicles in the United States and 44,131 vehicles in Canada due to faulty airbag inflators that could potentially cause serious or fatal injuries.

The recall was reported by the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) on Wednesday, and updated on Transport Canada's website on Thursday.

An airbag inflator can explode, sending potentially deadly sharp metal fragments flying and striking the driver or others in the vehicle, NHTSA said.

BMW said the issue covers airbag inflators that had been previously recalled, but a vehicle could have had a replacement steering wheel installed with a defective airbag.

In a statement emailed to CBC News, the company wrote that replacements are only needed "if the original steering wheel has been replaced with one containing an airbag module affected by the recall."

Owners can take vehicles to dealers for inspections, and if a steering wheel with a recalled airbag is found, it will be replaced. BMW said it is unaware of any crashes or injuries tied to the new recall.

The faulty airbag inflators manufactured by Japanese automotive parts company Takata are at the centre of the largest, most complex recall process in auto history.

More than 30 deaths — including at least 26 in the United States — and hundreds of injuries since 2009 have been attributed to Takata airbags fitted to vehicles of various automakers.

In 2020, NHTSA said it had identified a U.S. death tied to a Takata airbag inflator rupture in a BMW crash in Arizona.

Over the past decade, more than 100 million vehicles fitted with Takata airbag inflators have been recalled worldwide.

Once the world's leading supplier of airbags, Takata filed for bankruptcy in 2017 after the scandal.

According to Transport Canada, the latest recall involves some BMW 1 and 3 Series vehicles from the years 2005 through 2012, as well as the X3 and X5 models from 2005 through 2016.